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THE HISTORY

OF

BRITISH JOURNALISM.

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OF

BRITISH JOURNALISM,

FROM THE

FOUNDATION OF THE NEWSPAPER PRESS IN ENGLAND,

TO THE REPEAL OF THE STAMP ACT IN 1855,

WITH

SKETCHES OF PRESS CELEBRITIES.

47871

BY

ALEXANDER ANDREWS.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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WITH AN INDEX.

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PREFACE.

FOURTEEN years ago, we had a note-book most closely but confusedly crammed with memoranda, statistics, and anecdotes connected with newspapers and their writers; a perfect chaos of fragments picked up here and there in the course of desultory reading—out of the manuscripts in the British Museum, or the latest provincial journal. It was in 1841 that Mr. P. L. Simmonds read before the Statistical Society of London a paper on Newspapers, which was the most elaborate, if not really the first, published collection of facts relating to the subject, for Mr. Nichols' anecdotes amount to little more than a list of titles. Mr. Simmonds' paper did not come into our hands till 1844, and suggested to us a reference to our own storehouse, and an overhauling and attempt at arrangement or classification of its contents. It was only lately, however, that we had any view to publication, but, since it occurred to us, we have attempted to reduce a mass of somewhat heterogeneous matter to

order, and to string it upon the endless chain of History. The adoption of a chronological arrangement—necessary, it appeared to us, in all other respects—rendered this a less easy task than it might seem, for we had got our anecdotes parcelled, and lotted out, and classified in distinct branches of the subject—as the history of defunct papers, of existing papers, of unlicensed printing, of newspaper legislation, of reporting, of editors and press writers, and so on; and when we came to pick out facts as they had occurred in the order of time, they looked to us very forlorn, detached from the companion facts of the same order with which they had been associated, and which they tended either to illustrate or contrast. We, however, trust that a carefully compiled index may compensate for this inconvenience by affording reference at once to the several parts of the work at which allusions to a particular paper or a certain writer occur; so that, if the history of a journal has been necessarily cut up to fit the pieces into the places they belonged to, the Index may afford a key to the puzzle, and enable the reader to put it together again.

In sketching the lives of Press worthies—and unworthies, some explanation may be necessary of the rule by which we have been guided. As a rule, then, we have sought out and illustrated, by all the facts we could collect, the lives of men whose acts had

been unwritten, or only dotted down here and there—the obscure workers of the great engine, whose lives, spent in the night-work of the newspapers, lay buried in a congenial darkness. Now and then—as in the case of Wilkes, Cobbett, and one or two others—we have glanced at the lives of those whose names are historical; but only in cases where their connexion with the Newspaper Press has been inadequately mentioned by their biographers, or where there is not a satisfactory biography of them extant. Thus Addison, Steele, Swift, Bolingbroke, Prior, Fielding, Smollett, Sheridan, Canning, Coleridge, Lamb, Mackintosh, Wordsworth, Southey, Hook, Moore, have all had their lives written in a manner that would leave us nothing to do but to repeat what everybody who reads already knows—it is sufficient to write their names upon the muster-roll of the Press; but there are others who have had as much (and perhaps in some cases more) to do with its progress, whom the world hardly remembers now by name.

We have endeavoured to guard against any leaning to either side of politics in speaking of such newspapers as exist in our own time, and trust our reticence, in regard to their personal or private concerns, may not disappoint the reader. The Press of England being, by general consent as well as by the desire of its conductors, worked behind a screen, it would be as far from our province as from etiquette,

to attempt to raise the curtain for the gratification of a few inquisitive minds; but, where contemporary Press writers have allowed the facts of their lives to appear in a form which justifies the idea that they furnished them, we have not hesitated to quote from them, as in the sketches we have borrowed from "Men of the Time."

Finally, we have aimed at securing precision and correctness, by comparing authorities and referring to original documents; and we flatter ourselves that, by attention to this particular, we have rendered our history a reliable record of the Newspaper Press of Great Britain and her possessions.

LONDON, *Dec. 20th*, 1858.

THE HISTORY

OF

BRITISH JOURNALISM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

From a miserable sheet of flimsy paper, blotted with coarse letter-press, describing some fabulous event, or retailing some more than doubtful story: or, now a mass of slavish panegyric, now of violent and undiscriminating abuse, issued stealthily, read under the breath, circulated from hand to hand unseen, we all know that our modern newspapers have sprung. But the change has been the work of more than two centuries. Dependent as it was on the progress of public enlightenment, of government liberality, of general liberty and knowledge; checked by the indifference of a people or the caprices of a party; suppressed by a king, persecuted by a parliament, harassed by a licenser, burnt by a hangman, and trampled by a mob, the newspaper has been slow in climbing to its present height. It surely must be worth while to glance back at the marks it has left in its steady though gradual ascent: to review the growth of the Giant which now awes potentates, and it may scarcely be too much to say, rules the destinies of the world. May we

not linger with advantage over the history of the struggles of its birth, the convulsions of its infancy? Or do we owe so little to our free press—at once our censor and our champion—that these matters are of no moment to us? Of no moment may they be to the merchant who makes use of the daily sheet to guide him in his purchases or sales, to the fashionable lady who consults it for the latest scandal of Belgravia, to the shopkeeper who advertises his wares, or the honest yeoman who reads it for the sake of its "accidents and offences;" but thinking minds have perhaps wondered why the scattered facts which are known of its early history have never been woven together, and heartily wish they had been.

Much that was before known, and many facts which lay hidden in the depths of our dark and unfathomable public records, in their dusty and inaccessible storehouses, were thrown together by the late Mr. Knight Hunt in his "Fourth Estate." We say "thrown together," for Mr. Hunt candidly admits that he had had but few opportunities of collecting the facts necessary for a history of journalism, and therefore modestly calls his book "*Contributions towards* a History of Newspapers."

This, published in the year 1850, was the first attempt at anything like "a bringing together, in a distinct and tangible form, a number of previously scattered dates and passages illustrative of the history of the newspaper press." An article in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," containing the stereotyped falsehood as to its first appearance in England; a few papers in *Chambers's Journal*, in 1834,—about the best on the subject; discursive articles, treating more of the importance of the present than the history of the past newspaper, in the *Edinburgh* and in the *British and Foreign Quarterly Review*, in 1837; and a wretched pamphlet, called "The Periodical Press of Great Britain; or, an Inquiry into the State of the Public Journals," published in 1809, comprised the printed history of the English

newspaper, although incidental but much more important notices of it occur in Nichols's "Literary Anecdotes," Chalmers's "Life of Ruddiman," Timperley's "Encyclopædia of Literary and Typographical Anecdote," and a Paper, read by Mr. P. L. Simmonds before the Statistical Society of London, June 21st, 1841. "The Public Press" and "News" have formed the subjects of several popular lectures, none of which have passed into print, but we believe the most comprehensive were those before the Salisbury Mechanics' Institute, delivered in 1836, by J. Hearn, Esq., editor of the *Salisbury and Wiltshire Herald;* before the Marylebone Literary and Scientific Institution (two lectures), July 27, 1840, by G. F. Richardson, Esq., F.G.S.; and before the Leeds Philosophical Society, January 2, 1855, by C. Kemplay, Esq.

Mr. Hunt might therefore well feel anxious to do something towards recording the history of a profession to which he belonged, and such time as his editorial duties and his health allowed he devoted to this labour of love. But "half-hours that could be filched from heavier duties," "before, or between, or after real work," will not suffice to record the history of an institution so vast; they were all he could afford to the subject, and those half-hours he has well employed.

We had been long expecting that the subject would be taken up, and had resolved to place at the disposal of the person who might venture upon it a collection of notes and particulars which had occupied us some years in getting together, when Mr. Hunt sent his two volumes into the world. At once perceiving that from the very nature of the work much that was related by that gentleman would have to be repeated in any other book upon the same subject, we had consigned our gleanings to oblivion, till a recent article in one of the Reviews, calling for further details of newspaper history, induced us to polish them up and see what we could make of them. If we hope to con-

tribute a few facts and fill up a few outlines, to trace more regularly, and perhaps in more detail, the ground that has been so little traversed, we shall endeavour to avoid, as far as we can do it without injustice to our subject, the wider field which Mr. Hunt has taken in his second title, "The Liberty of the Press," *generally*. "The Newspaper" is our text, and about it alone we wish to write; Political Pamphlets at one time, and Philosophical Essays at another, took so many of its features, that we shall have to touch upon them both, but we shall have done with them as soon as possible, and return to our subject "pure and simple."

And a great subject it is! of which men of all opinions have agreed in one: that "its liberties and the liberties of the people must stand or fall together," as Hume was the first to declare; of which Erskine said, "Its freedom has alone made our government what it is, and can alone preserve it;" of which Burke said that, "a part of the reading of all, the whole of the reading of the far greater number, it is a more important instrument than is generally imagined." "It is," thunders Junius (and he charges us to instil it into our children's minds)—"it is the palladium of all the civil, political, and religious rights of an Englishman!" That "knowledge is diffused among our people by it," as Johnson emphasised; that "it is the protector of freedom, a watchful guardian, capable of uniting the weak against the encroachments of power," as Goldsmith thought; that "it secures that publicity to the administration of the laws which is the main source of its purity and wisdom," as Mansfield observed; that "it pervades and checks, and perhaps, in the last resort, nearly governs the whole of the government of England," as Canning declared; that "through its assistance, a whole nation, as it were, holds council and deliberates," as De Lolme has written: such is what has been thought of the newspaper press by great and learned men, some of whom it had handled roughly too.

A great subject indeed! "Give me but the liberty of the press," said Sheridan, "and I will give to the minister a venal house of peers—I will give him a corrupt and servile house of commons—I will give him the full sway of the patronage of office—I will give him the whole host of ministerial influence—I will give him all the power that place can confer upon him to purchase up submission and overawe resistance, and yet, armed with the liberty of the press, I will go forth to meet him undismayed—I will attack the mighty fabric he has reared with that mightier engine—I will shake down from its height corruption, and bury it amidst the ruins of the abuses it was meant to shelter!" Such (who can deny it?) is the tremendous power of the press of the present day. The picture was perhaps a little overcharged as applied to its influence in the time of Sheridan.

"Great is journalism," cries Carlyle; "is not every able editor a ruler of the world, being a persuader of it?" "It is the newspaper," says Bulwer Lytton, "which gives to liberty its practical life, its constant observation, its perpetual vigilance, its unrelaxing activity. It is the daily and sleepless watchman that reports to you every danger which menaces the institutions of your country, and its interests at home and abroad. It informs legislation of public opinion, and it informs the people of the acts of legislation: thus keeping up that constant sympathy, that good understanding between people and legislators which conduces to the maintenance of order, and prevents the stern necessity for revolution." A testimony to its importance is even wrung from the judges, who sit in jealous watchfulness of its licence: "I am willing to acknowledge, in the most ample terms, the information, the instruction, and the amusement derived from the public press," says Lord Lyndhurst, cautiously: but Lord Brougham speaks out more honestly: "There is nothing to fear," says his lordship, "from open public discussion—from that press which enables us to speak as we think."

Hallam comes forward to bear a less equivocal testimony: "For almost all that keeps up in us permanently and effectually the spirit of regard to liberty and the public good, we must look to the unshackled and independent energies of the press." "Freedom of discussion is our birthright," cried Sir Francis Burdett, "and by the dissemination of truth alone, through the medium of a free press, can we hope to attain or preserve our liberty." Bishop Horne says, "A newspaper is the history of that world in which we now live, and with it we are more concerned than with days which have passed away and exist only in remembrance." More concise is Benjamin Constant: "The press is mistress of intelligence, and intelligence is mistress of the world."

It is quite impossible for foreigners to *understand* our press: they have nothing like it. Napoleon, however, must have mastered the idea, if, indeed, he said, "A journalist is a giver of advice, a regent of sovereigns, a tutor of nations. Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a hundred thousand bayonets." Such a remark could scarcely have applied to the newspapers of the Empire. De Tocqueville's is more general, and would do for the press all over the world: "The newspaper is the only instrument by which the same thought can be dropped into a thousand minds at the same moment."

Of this mighty Mind-Engine—of this tremendous Moral Power, let us attempt to write the history; if but one half of what has been said of it were true, it should have had chroniclers innumerable, for where could a grander theme be found? Such an institution should be worth tracing from its earliest germ—from that origin and through that growth, of which an Edinburgh Reviewer has eloquently said:

"In common with everything of signal strength, journalism is a plant of slow and gradual growth. . . . . Of far more modern date than the other estates of the realm, the

fourth estate has overshadowed and surpassed them all. It has created the want which it supplies. It has obtained paramount influence and authority, partly by assuming them, but still more by deserving them. Of all puissances in the political world, it is at once the mightiest, the most irresponsible, the best administered, and the least misused. And, taken in its history, position, and relations, it is unquestionably the most grave, noticeable, formidable phenomenon—the greatest FACT of our times."

CHAPTER II.

THE EARLIEST NEWSPAPERS—THE "ACTA DIURNA" OF THE ROMANS—THE "GAZZETTAS" OF VENICE—WRITTEN NEWS—NEWS CORRESPONDENTS—THE FIRST EXECUTION OF A NEWS WRITER—DERIVATION OF THE WORD "NEWES."

In inquiring into the rise and progress of the British newspaper press, it will be necessary to look into the annals of another country for the original from which the art of collecting and publishing, and commenting on intelligence, was copied—even without regard to its probable existence in remote ages. It would doubtless be flattering to our national pride to acknowledge, as of our own creation, such a noble institution as the public press has become; so indigenous as it would appear, at a first glance, to our soil, and congenial, in its stateliness and independence, to the feelings by which Englishmen are governed—so warmly as it has nursed and fostered all that, as a nation, we have to be proud of—so bravely as it has battled, and so nobly as it has suffered in the cause of our rights and liberties—so vigorously and successfully as it has fought against tyranny on the one hand and anarchy on the other—so zealously as it has assisted improvement and diffused knowledge—and so instrumental as it has been in giving weight and influence to the British name abroad,—we say our national pride would be flattered by claiming it as an idea springing out of those noble principles in which we trace the germs of the other institutions belonging to a free and enlightened people which we enjoy.

But if we are denied this proud boast, we may take

pleasure in noticing how this foreign blossom has flourished on our own soil—how it has expanded into a far wider sphere of usefulness and importance than any other nation has been able to nurse or train it to—and in contrasting its state of majesty here with its weakly condition even in the countries where it was first sown; seeming to show that there is something in our constitution which favours the dissemination of public opinion, without the free power of expressing which a newspaper can be looked upon with little reverence, and would not deserve as many words as we may, perhaps, occupy sheets in recording its history. We must remember that only *nominally* was the first newspaper published in a foreign land: the press as it now is, and as only we could be proud of it—THE FREE PRESS OF ENGLAND—is peculiarly our own.

Publications answering to some extent the purposes of newspapers would appear to have been not entirely unknown in the remote ages. The Romans had their daily reports of public occurrences, called *Acta Diurna*, spoken of by Seneca. Suetonius and Tacitus also allude to the *Acta Diurna*, but more, it would seem, in the sense of journals of the proceedings of the municipal councils, as *Talia diurnis urbis actis mandare* (Tacitus). Dr. Johnson gives a few specimens of these news sheets in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1740, which contain short announcements of a much more familiar kind than we are in the habit of associating with the idea of ancient Rome. Thus we have reports of an assault case before the magistrates—of a brawl at the Hog-in-Armour Tavern, in Banker's-street—of a thunderstorm—of a fire on Mount Cœlius—of the funeral of Marcia—and other every-day occurrences, which curiously remind us that the Romans were but men; and that Marcus Fuscus and Lucius Albus were brought up to the police court for being drunk and disorderly, and that Titus Lanius was fined for giving short weight. These *Acta Diurna* were issued "by authority"

of the government, both of the republic and of the empire, and were posted in two or three of the most frequented parts for the perusal of the citizens. The writers (*actuarii*) seem even to have been possessed of some system of reporting speeches; for their papers contained, for a short time, the proceedings of the senate,* the pleadings in the courts of law, &c. After the death of Julius Cæsar, the privilege of publishing the former was withdrawn; and the only confirmation of the latter belief occurs in the letter of Pliny the Younger to Tacitūs, in which he calls his attention to a cause in which he had been engaged, "which cannot have escaped you, since it is in the public registers," which, after all, may have been but the archives of the court in which it was heard by the consuls, although he would then, one would think, not have been so sure that Tacitus would have read them.

Be this as it may, there remains much obscurity as to the actual character of these publications. Mr. Hunt protests against their being considered as at all allied to the subject, or bearing any relationship to the newspaper; but we would respectfully suggest that in all essential points they make good a claim to be regarded as newspapers, if periodical publication and the promulgation of news are, as we take them to be, the essential points of difference between newspapers and proclamations, or pamphlets. The objection that they were in manuscript is rather puerile—"Rome had neither types nor presses!" But types and presses do not constitute a newspaper; and we might as well argue that *Lloyd's Evening Post* of the last century was not a newspaper because it had only four pages instead of eight.

For copies of these *Acta Diurna*, we must refer the curious to the "Preface to the *Gentleman's Magazine*" for 1740, contenting ourselves with quoting one of them for a sample :—

* Suetonius, "Life of Cæsar," chap. xx.

"4th of the Calends of April. The fasces with Livinius the Consul. It thundered; an oak was struck with lightning on that part of Mount Palatine, called Summa Velia, early in the afternoon. A fray happened in a tavern at the lower end of Banker's-street, in which the keeper of the Hog-in-Armour Tavern was dangerously wounded. Tertinius, the Ædile, fined the butchers for selling meat which had not been inspected by the overseers of the markets. The fine is to be employed in building a chapel to the Temple of the goddess Tellus."

Mr. Hunt has given these alleged relics in an appendix to his volumes, but it would have been as well if he had detailed the history of them, in order that his readers might attach as much importance to them as they might appear to deserve. The first series, dated B.C. 585, rests upon the least doubtful authority, Johnson copying them from Stephen Pighius' Annals of Rome, and Pighius asserting that he received them from James Susius, who found them among the papers of Ludovicus Vives. Their authenticity has been doubted by Professor Wesseling. The second series (B.C. 691) is quoted from the Camdenian Lectures (1688—91) of Dodwell; who adopts both series as genuine. The second, he says, he had from a friend of his, Hadrian Beverland, who had them from Isaac Vossius, who copied them from a parcel of inscriptions which Petavius had prepared for the press. Now Beverland, to begin with, is described by Moreri as prostituting his pen to the composition of obscene books, and dying insane; and it is of Vossius that Charles the Second is reported to have said, "This learned divine is a strange man; he believes everything but the Bible." So that it is possible that the one might have concocted, or the other have been deceived in, the *Acta* which were handed down through them to Dodwell.

In a later volume of the *Gentleman's Magazine* (October 1817, p. 291), both sets of the *Acta* are defended by Luders, but on no new grounds.

Petronius, in his *Satyrica*, parodies the style of the *Acta Diurna*:

"On the 26th of July, thirty boys and forty girls were born on the estate of Cuma, belonging to Trimalchio.

"Five hundred bushels of wheat were taken from the yard and housed in the granary. Five hundred oxen were trained.

"On the same day Mithridates, a slave, was crucified for speaking irreverently of our master's tutelary genius.

"Same day, £80,729. 3*s*. 4*d*. was returned into the Treasury, because it could not be placed out at interest.

"Same day, a fire broke out in Pompey's gardens, which began at night in the Stewards' lodges."*

During the sanguinary reigns of Cæsar's successors, the publication was lost to the Romans, and nothing of the kind seems to have been revived. We must confess our own opinion, that it was never of much importance, or we should have had more frequent mention of it; for what writer of the present day fills a volume without once alluding to the newspapers? But we may be pardoned for indulging a pleasant fancy, and conceiving the possibility of the publications, such as they were, having been introduced into Britain, and perhaps a similar system of promulgating news adopted, during its occupation by the Romans.

Italy—whatever may have been the real character of the *Acta Diurna*—can still claim to have been the birthplace of journalism; and the city, whose glories again illuminated her peninsula, may be left to dispute with Rome the honour of calling into existence the first public newspaper. "The first modern sheet of news," according to Chalmers, made its appearance in Venice, in or about the year 1536, for the purpose of enlightening the Venetians on the progress of the war with Turkey. It was in manuscript, written in a legible hand, and read aloud at particular stations, but only appeared once a month. In the

* Petronii Satyrica, cap. xxxvii. p. 136, Amstel. 1700.

Maggliabecchi Library, at Florence, thirty volumes of this journal, all in MS., are still preserved; and it was not until the close of the sixteenth century that this inconvenient arrangement was abandoned, and the printing-press substituted for the pen.*

But insignificant as was the *Gazzetta* of Venice in the respects of size and influence, and even of information, its name is perpetuated in almost every country to the present day, in the title which obtains most among newspapers of all nations, *Gazette*. The name was derived, according to some, from the Latin word *gaza*, a treasury or store; according to others, from the Italian *gazza* or *gazzara*, a magpie or chatterer; but, with more probability, on the authority of several writers, from the name of a coin, *gazzetta* (the value of which was between a farthing and a halfpenny of our money), now out of circulation, which was the price of the paper, or the fee formerly paid for the reading of the sheet in manuscript. Blount's *Glossographia*, early in the seventeenth century, gives the following definitions to the word:

"GAZZETTA.—A certain Venetian coin, scarce worth one farthing; also, a bill of news, or short relation of the occurrences of the time, printed most commonly at Venice, and thence dispersed every month into most parts of Christendom."

It had now evidently assumed a more general character, and must have extended its information, as the news of Venice alone would scarcely have interested sufficiently "most parts of Christendom."

These again Mr. Hunt rather fastidiously, we think, repudiates as newspapers, on the plea that "they were not published for circulation;" but the above extract from Blount, which he could not have seen, shows that they were widely circulated.

* The earliest of these papers contained in the British Museum is dated 1570, and is at that time printed.

It was due to these progenitors of an extensive and honourable tribe to enter concisely into their history—in fact, that of the British press would not have been complete without a glance at the parent stem from which it sprang; but we shall not stop further to trace the progress of the newspaper press in other countries, but come at once to the period when it took root in our own.

When the spread of knowledge had made people interested in and inquisitive about public events, intelligence was circulated in a manner that still excluded the general public from participating in it, and made it a luxury attainable only by the rich. The classes who were beginning to dismiss the jester from their establishments, were taking on the news correspondent; the minds of the nobility and landed gentry had ascended a step higher, but the masses were still groping down below in the dark. Probably the extreme rigour with which the powers of the Censor were exercised, and the great restrictions with which the progress of printing was fettered during the reign of Elizabeth, prevented anything in the shape of pamphlets of news being made public, for we find that but little of the kind appeared in her reign; but there was a profession of "news writers," or correspondents, who collected such scraps of information as they could from various sources, and for a subscription of three or four pounds per annum sent them every post-day to their employers in the country. Communications somewhat of this sort are preserved in Fenn's Letters, giving the particulars of events during the wars of the Roses.

A curious entry in the family accounts of the house of Clifford, of Yorkshire, is quoted by Whitaker, in his "History of Craven," from which it would appear that the calling of news writer was not considered dishonourable:

"To Captain Robinson, by my lord's commands, for writing letters of news to his lordship, for half a year, five pounds."

That the news was not always to be depended upon, is insinuated in Florio's "Second Frutes" (1591):

"T.—These be newes caste abroade to feede the common sorte. I doo not believe them.

"C.—Yea; but they are written to verie worshipful marchants.

"T.—By so much the lesse do I believe them. Doo not you know that everie yeare such newes are spreade abroade?

"C.—I am almost of your minde, for I seldome see these written reports prove true.

"T.—Prognostications, newes, devices, and letters from forraine countries, good master Cæsar, are but used as confections, to feed the common people withal.

"C.—A man must give no more credite to Exchange and Powle's newes than to fugitives' promises and plaiers' fables."

This profession of "news correspondent" appears to have continued in existence as late as the beginning of the eighteenth century, although no doubt fallen into great disrepute, for the prospectus of the *Evening Post*, which appeared on September 6th, 1709, thus alludes to it:

"There must be 3*l.* or 4*l.* per annum paid by those gentlemen who are out of town for written news, which is so far generally from having any probability of matter of fact in it, that it is generally stuffed up with a 'we hear,' &c., or 'an eminent Jew merchant has received a letter,' &c., being nothing more than a downright fiction."

As late as 1740, we find an entry in the ledger of Henry Woodfall the printer, which would leave us to believe that he was a purveyor of news in this shape:

"Mr. Craighton of Ipswich.

"1740-1. February 2. To writing one year's news £5. 5*s.*"

These correspondents had been a whole century going to the wall. The swaggering gossipper about the court had given up the trade to the disbanded captain, who, having served abroad, was presumed to know the movements of the armies. With peace the captain's *prestige* was gone, and

the decidedly shabby gentleman, who haunted the chief places of public talk, Westminster Hall, Saint Paul's, and the Exchange, earned a precarious living by collecting news for his country subscribers, and was the person so kindly favoured with perusals of the letters of the mythological "eminent Jew merchant." The printing-press had already pushed them out of its way, and they were soon glad to go into its service, and to feed its iron jaws with matter for digestion at the rate of a penny a line. Or worse, if there were many Captain Rockinghams among them, who, as Gifford informs us in his Notes to Ben Jonson, is introduced in a curious poem called the "Great Assizes," as a news correspondent, "whose occupation was invaded by a swarm of 'paper wasters,' &c.,

> 'Who weekly uttered such a mass of lies
> Under the specious name of novelties,'.

that the captain found his trade overrun, and was obliged to betake himself to 'plucking tame pigeons' (tricking) for a livelihood."

In Fletcher's "Fair Maid of the Inn" we have a glimpse of another of these captain correspondents, who "writ a full hand gallop and wasted more harmless paper than ever did laxative physic."

One Rowland White, "the postmaster, a notable busy man," "constantly writ over to Sir Robert Sydney, at Flushing, the news and intrigues of the court," for which he (Sydney) "allowed him a salary," according to Collins ("Memorials of State"), quoted by Mr. Hunt; but, if we are to search out all such correspondents, and consider them as professional writers of news, there is no writer of an ordinary letter of the times whom we should not regard as one of our early journalists. All letters, especially in times of agitation or trouble, would be written to convey news; and we even doubt whether Edward Coleman, the victim of Titus Oates, was sufficiently a *professional* news writer to require mention: however, as he was a martyr in the cause—perhaps the first who was hanged for writing a letter

of news—we will glance at him as he goes along on his hurdle to Tyburn, forsworn by Oates, assailed by Jeffreys, and judged by Scroggs—a worthy trio to make the first declaration of war against the circulation of intelligence—for such was his offence after all. It matters not that his intelligence was false, his zeal indiscreet, his principles criminal, it was for *circulating* his news letters, not for *writing* them, that he was charged with high treason.

Descended from a good family in Suffolk, Coleman had raised himself to the office of secretary to the Duke of York: but Roger North, in his Life of Lord Keeper Guildford, informs us that, going the northern circuit, "as his lordship passed along, divers gentlemen showed him circular news letters that came to them;" "and upon his lordship's inquiry, he was told that they came from Mr. Coleman, the Duke of York's secretary. His lordship, on his return, made a representation to the king of this news letter from such a person, and the ill consequences of it. Whereupon Mr. Coleman was turned out of the duke's service, but never blamed, for he was afterwards made the Duchess of York's secretary."

Still suspicion had pointed at him, and Oates made the most of it. Coleman was condemned to death, and he died accordingly, abandoned in his extremity by the promise-breaking master he had served, and hooted by a mob which did not know his offence. Two centuries, saving a score of years, have rolled up their mists between him and us, and we have but an imperfect view of the first martyr of journalism; but there appears to have been but little to admire in his character beyond his fidelity to the cause of the gloomy bigot to whom he gave up his life.

In the reigns of Charles and James these "newes books" still struggled against the printed sheets of news. Pepys in his Diary twice alludes to them, but without comment.

And here we may pause to remark upon the great flights which certain learned gentlemen have lately taken in search

of the derivation of this same word "newes." Soaring high above what would appear to us poor benighted mortals as the root from which it sprang—the plain English adjective *new*—they have fought fiercely to assign to it all sorts of sources: from the French, from the Norman, from the German, the Dutch, the Teutonic, and the Flemish. Nay, one suggests the possibility of its coming from the Greek *νους*, the understanding, and another from the English word *noise!* Still more ridiculous is the origin assigned to it by most of the small encyclopædists from the letters N. E. S. W. having stood on the heading of the earliest newspapers, to indicate that the intelligence they contained was collected from all points of the compass! This hypothesis, started, we believe, in the *European Magazine* in 1747, and clung to even by Mr. Haydn in his "Dictionary of Dates," was very pretty and ingenious, and might have been accepted as correct but for two very troublesome facts—that, despite the assertion, no newspapers are known with the pretended heading, and that the earliest spelling of the word was *newes*, which would give us five cardinal points instead of four. This superficial statement, uttered gravely in 1850, may be traced to the "Wit's Recreations," where it is suggested playfully as long ago as 1640:—

"When news doth come, if any would discusse
The letters of the word, resolve it thus:
News is conveyed by letter, word, or mouth,
And comes to us from north, east, west, and south."

In the same year, too, Butter, alluding to the newspapers of the Continent, calls them "novels," which confirms the more rational opinion of the derivation of the word.

It is better worth our while to follow, with Dr. Johnson, the derivation of the word "journal," which he finds in a source of which it has now lost every trace, not retaining *even a single letter* of the original word. From *dies* comes *diurnus;* from *diurnus*, the Italian *giorna*, a day; from *giorna, giornale*, which has its derivative in "journal."

CHAPTER III.

THE "ENGLISH MERCURIE" FORGERIES—HENRY VIII.'S PROCLAMATION AGAINST NEWS BOOKS—THE NEWS BALLADS OF THE REIGN OF MARY—NEWS BOOKS OF ELIZABETH AND JAMES I.—PERIODICAL PAMPHLETS OF NEWS—THE FIRST WEEKLY NEWSPAPER—NATHANIEL BUTTER AND HIS COLLEAGUES—THE FIRST EDITORS—WILLIAM WATTS—THE "GALLO-BELGICUS" ERROR—THE FIRST NEWS VENDORS—POPULAR OPINION OF THE "NEWES"—NEWS BOOKS AND COLLECTORS.

We have yet another halt to make before passing into the history of the newspaper proper; for so fondly has the *English Mercurie* been hugged to the nation's heart—so carefully has it been preserved in the nation's repository of rarities and valuables—that, impostor as it is, we must give a slight sketch of what has so long been treasured as England's first newspaper, not to arraign it as a fraud, but to wish it had not been a forgery.

Chalmers, in his "Life of Ruddiman," proudly brings the *English Mercurie* into notice. This was, we believe, the first time its meretricious pages were held out to the caresses of the antiquary. Chalmers's account was reprinted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1794, and afterwards incorporated with Mr. Nichols's and the Reverend Samuel Ayscough's particulars of early newspapers in the fourth volume of the "Literary Anecdotes," and yet later copied by Disraeli into his "Curiosities of Literature;" whilst a fresh description of the papers appeared in a "Concise History of Ancient Institutions, Inventions," &c., published in 1823. According to Mr. Watts, to whose discernment we shall have to pay a tribute presently, the "Encyclopædia Londinensis," the "Encyclopædia Metropolitana," the "Ency-

clopædia Britannica," the "British Cyclopædia," and the "Penny Cyclopædia," the "Encyclopædia Americana," the "Conversations Lexicon" of Brockhaus, the "Neuestes Conversations Lexicon" of Wigand, the "Dictionnaire de la Conversation et de la Lecture," and the Russian "Entsiklopedicheskii Leksikon" (and, he might have added, the "Annual Register" for 1794, Tomlyn's "Law Dictionary," Cooke's "History of Party," and Timperley's "Dictionary of Printing"), also adopted Chalmers's statements, besides hundreds of minor publications, such as Hone's "Year Book," and the smaller fry of magazines and newspapers, so that there was documentary title enough to support the *English Mercurie* in the distinguished place it held for five-and-forty years.

But in 1839 the suspicions of Mr. Thomas Watts, of the British Museum, were excited, and the result of his examination proves how easily a mistake may pass current for a length of time without question, which, had the writers who so readily adopted Chalmers's statements but taken the trouble to inquire into—that is, had they but looked at the paper they were writing about—must have been detected long before. That Chalmers *was* deceived there can be no doubt; but *how* he could have been deceived it seems more difficult to understand, when we read "A Letter to Antonio Panizzi, Esq., &c., on the Reputed Earliest Printed Newspaper, the *English Mercurie*, 1588. By Thomas Watts, British Museum."

The *English Mercurie*, which delighted and deceived the eyes of Chalmers, consists of seven numbers, contained in Dr. Birch's Collection, No. 4106. Of these seven numbers four are in manuscript and three in Roman type; the latter "published by authoritie, for the suppression of false reports; ymprinted at London, by Christopher Barker, her Highnesses printer, in 1588."* The first of these papers, dated July 23d, and numbered 50, contains advices

* Erroneously printed 1558 in the "Fourth Estate," vol. i. p. 33.

from Sir Francis Walsingham, reporting the movements of the Armada, meetings of, and loyal addresses from the Corporation of London, declaring their staunch allegiance to the throne, &c. No. 51, dated July 26th, announces the arrival of a Scots ambassador from James VI., promising the support of that monarch against the Spaniards, which is followed by advertisements of new books and pamphlets. No. 54, with the date of November 24th, gives an account of the queen's proceeding to Saint Paul's, to offer public thanksgiving for her successes; in fact, the contents were just such as the *London Gazette* was filled with two centuries later.

Long and gravely had Burleigh been extolled for inventing this means of disabusing and reassuring the public mind during the panic occasioned by the threatened Armada, when, after two minutes' examination, Mr. Watts saw sufficient in the treasured documents to induce him to pronounce them to Mr. Jones, his assistant, the most transparent forgeries. And on these grounds:

1st. That, in the printed papers, the type was of the character used in or about 1766;

2d. That two of the written numbers are the originals, in modern spelling, of the printed copies in the antique spelling badly imitated, with their corrections and additions;

3d. That the handwriting is of as modern a character as the type;

4th. That they are made up of a confusion of dates and circumstances that could hardly have occurred had they been written at the time represented; and

5th, and most conclusive, the paper on which the manuscript is written bears the watermark of the royal arms and the initials "G. R."

Mr. Watts has since found reason, in the similarity of the handwriting and other circumstances, to charge this impudent and infamous forgery to the second Lord

Hardwicke; nor, perhaps, was Dr. Birch himself imposed upon by it.

Mr. Disraeli, in the Preface to the twelfth edition of his "Curiosities of Literature," thus feelingly alludes to Chalmers's mistake:—

"I witnessed, fifty years ago, that laborious researcher busied among the long dusty shelves of our periodical papers, which then reposed in the ante-chamber to the former reading-room of the British Museum. To the industry which I had witnessed I confided, and such positive and precise evidence could not fail to be accepted by all. In the British Museum, indeed, George Chalmers found the printed *English Mercurie;* but there, also, it now appears, he might have seen the *original,* with all its corrections before it was sent to the press, written on paper of modern fabric. . . . The fact is, the whole is a modern forgery, for which Birch, preserving it among his papers, has not assigned either the occasion or the motive. I am inclined to think it was a *jeu d'esprit* of historical antiquarianism, concocted by himself and his friends the Yorkes."

Such is the history of the *English Mercurie,* for which Chalmers innocently declares England was indebted "to the sagacity of Elizabeth and the wisdom of Burleigh." We somehow cannot but feel glad that the spuriousness of this pet discovery did not come to light in the lifetime of its industrious and honest explorer.

The *English Mercurie,* then, *not* being the first printed newspaper, we must go on to find the one that was. Scarcely do the printed news books deserve the title—those pamphlets of news which made their appearance at the close of the sixteenth century merely treating of a particular event—somewhat in the style of our Seven Dials sheets—not appearing periodically, or continuously, or even twice under the same title, although they certainly may claim close kindred to the newspaper, and, in its

absence, served its purpose, for Burton says, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," in 1614, "If any read now a-days, it is a play-booke, or *pamphlet of newes*."

The collection of newspapers in the British Museum (commenced by Sir Hans Sloane, and added to by the purchase for 1,000*l.*, in 1813, of Dr. Burney's collection, the addition in 1766 of Dr. Birch's, and the presentation by George III. of the Thomasson collection) affords us many specimens of these, the immediate forerunners of the British newspapers, although it contains none of earlier date than 1603. Of private collections, that of Mr. Nichols was the most complete, and happily was preserved in his dwelling-house from destruction, when the fire destroyed his contiguous printing-office in Red Lion-court.

The "Harleian Miscellany" (Codex, 5910, 1st volume, 5th part), among a collection of lists of printers, &c., has "A Statement of the Progress of Publick News and Papers: when they first began, their progress, increase, and uses and abuses to the people," in which the writer misses, rather than gains, a trace of printed news books in the reign of Henry VIII., of which, however, he can make nothing more than that they were "something of the kind," but chiefly attacks upon the Pope and Cardinal Wolsey. That, however, there was something more than this in Henry VIII.'s time we may infer from the following proclamation, which we transfer from the *Gentleman's Magazine* of September, 1794 (page 787). The proclamation was issued at the close of the year 1544, and was for the calling in and prohibiting of "certain bookes printed of newes, of the prosperous successes of the King's Ma'tie's arms in Scotland:"—

"The King's most Excellent Majestie understanding that certain light persones not regarding what they reported, wrote, or sett forthe, had caused to be imprinted and divulged certaine newes of the prosperous successes of

the King's Majestie's army in Scotland, whereas, although the effect of the victory was indeed true, yet the circumstances in divers points were in some parte over slenderly, in some parte untruly and amisse reported; his highness, therefore, not content to have anie such matters of so greate importance sette forthe, to the slaunder of his captaines and ministers, not to be otherwise reported than the truthe was, straightlie chargeth and commandeth all manner of persones into whose handes any of the said printed books should come, ymediately after they should hear of this proclamation, to bring the same bookes to the lord maior of London, or to the recorder, or some of the aldermen of the same, to thintent they might suppresse and burn them, upon pain that every person keeping any of the said bookes twenty-four hours after the making of this proclamation should suffer ymprisonment of his bodye, and be further punished at the King's Majestie's will and pleasure."

This proclamation (if genuine) points to more than mere libels on the Pope or Cardinal Wolsey; but it was possibly still only directed against the doggerel news ballads which we find in the reign of Mary. The Harleian scribe mentions a "Ballad of the Queene's being with childe" as one of the earliest; but about that time ballads of news "began to fly about in the city of London;" and he continues emphatically, "These, I say, were the forerunners of the newspapers." Unquestionably they were. It has been, unfortunately, the practice of the few writers who have treated this subject to seek for a full-blown newspaper to date from. Thus Chalmers starts with the *English Mercurie*, which he is delighted to find equal to anything the Gazetteer of his own day could compile; Nichols devotes all his attention to the completeness of his list of newspapers, beginning with Butter's; whilst Knight Hunt alludes to the news books only to deny that they have any features in common with the newspaper. Now we do not

see why the infant forms of the newspaper should be so slighted; nothing could be more natural in its growth, more easy in its changes, or more regular in its progress. First we have the written news letter furnished to the wealthy aristocracy; then, as the craving for information spread, the ballad of news, sung or recited; then the news pamphlet, more prosaically arranged; then the *periodical* sheet of news; and lastly, the newspaper. Does not the news ballad form an indispensable link in this chain, or are we to suppose that, after all, the newspaper started as near perfection as the periodical sheets of news of the seventeenth century? Have not the historians of the stage treated with becoming attention the scaffold at the Cross Keys, or the booth at the fair, although they were no more theatres than the news ballad was a newspaper, but only the forerunners of them?

There is an entry in the books of the Stationers' Company of three of these ballads, one of which is called "Newes out of Kent," and another "Newes out of Heaven and Hell," both printed in 1561—doggerel reports, no doubt, of some recent occurrence (perhaps the latter a tale of witchcraft)—but the title is suggestive, and affords a ray of light in the darkness. The dawn comes on, and we find the Harleian manuscribe more firm in his footing:—

"In the days of Queen Elizabeth we had several papers printed, relating to the affairs in France, Spain, and Holland, about the time of the civil wars in France, and those were for the most part translations from the Dutch and French. We must come down to the reign of James I., and that towards the latter end, when news began to be in fashion."

No papers of so early a date as the reign of Elizabeth are preserved in the British Museum, but we have been kindly favoured by Dr. Rimbault with the following list, which has fallen under his observation, all of which, with the exception of the last, are of that reign:—

" Newe newes, containing a short rehearsal of Stukely's and Morice's Rebellion," 4to, 1579.

" Newes from the North, or a Conference between Simon Certain and Pierce Plowman," 4to, 1579.

" Newes from Scotland, declaring the damnable life of Doctor Fian, a notable sorcerer, who was burned at Edenborough in January last," 4to, Gothic, 1591.*

" Newes from Spaine and Holland," 1593.

" Newes from Brest, or a Diurnal of Sir John Norris," 4to, 1594 (printed by Richard Yardley).

" Newes from Flanders," 1599.

" Newes out of Cheshire of the new found well," 1600.

" Newes from Gravesend," 4to, 1604.

We may add to Dr. Rimbault's list the following:—

" Wonderful and strange newes out of Suffolke and Essex, where it rayned wheat the space of six or seven miles," 12mo. 1583.

The titles of most of these pamphlets direct us to a very fair estimate of their contents; it must be confessed they were somewhat of the stamp of the " Full, True, and Particular Accounts " of Seven Dials. The public asked for news—and got in its first crude form, yet still in disjointed fragments:—

" Lamentable newes out of Monmouthshire in Wales, containinge the wonderful and fearfull accounts of the great overflowing of the waters in the said countye," &c., 1607.

" Woful newes from the west partes of England, of the burning of Tiverton," 4to, 1612, with a frontispiece.

" Strange newes from Lancaster, containing an account of a prodigious monster born in the township of Addlington in Lancashire, with two bodies joyned to one back." April 13th, 1613.

The appetite for news is whettened, and increased efforts

* At the commencement of the nineteenth century, Bulmer, of London, reprinted a single copy on vellum for Mr. G. H. Freeling—Dibdin's Decam. ii. 377.

are made to appease it. The pamphlets begin to assume a more definite form :—

"Newes from Spaine," published in 1611.
"Newes out of Germany," 1612.
"Good newes from Florence," 1614.
"Newes from Mamora," 1614.
"Newes from Gulick and Cleve," 1615.
"Newes from Italy," 1618.
"Newes out of Holland," published May 16th, 1619 (Dr. Burney's collection).
"Vox Populi, or Newes from Spaine," 1620.
"Newes from Hull," "Truths from York," "Warranted tidings from Ireland," "Newes from Poland," "Special passages from several places," &c. &c.

Such are samples of the titles of news books preserved in the British Museum and other collections, most of them purporting to be translations from the low Dutch.

We will give one title in full, to afford a general idea of what these pamphlets professed to be. We quote from Mr. Hunt's list, as one will stand for a dozen :—

"Newes out of Holland. London: printed by T. S. for Nathaniel Newberry, and are to be sold at his shop under St. Peter's Church in Cornhill, and in Pope's Head-alley, at the Sign of the Star, 1619."

The "newes," of which all these publications treated, was of the events of foreign countries; home affairs, probably in respect to the government, were seldom touched upon. And this peculiarity seems to have continued to mark the public prints, and for the same reason, during the greater part of the century, for Clarendon says of a period even five-and-twenty years later, that news from Scotland had hitherto never appeared in the English prints, but that intelligence from Hungary and other less important states was arranged under distinct heads. Still, as when Ben Jonson wrote his "Staple of News :"—

"And here I have my several rolls and files
Of news by the alphabet, and all put up
Under their heads."

In two or three years more these pamphlets became periodical, but the title still varied. One or two enterprising printers of news books undertook to bring them out at regular intervals, but they had yet to conceive the idea of ranging them under one regular head, numbering and paging them in orderly continuation. These printers were Nicholas Bourne and Thomas Archer, of the Exchange and "Pope's Head Pallace;" Nathaniel Newberry and William Sheffard, of Pope's Head-alley; and Nathaniel Butter, who is the acknowleged father of the regular newspaper press. The first of any regular series of newspapers, preserved in the British Museum, is dated 23d May, 1622, and entitled,

"The Weekly Newes from Italy, Germanie, &c. London: printed by J. D., for Nicholas Bourne and Thomas Archer."

Most of the succeeding numbers, which appear to have followed, with a few omissions, at weekly intervals, bear the general heading of "Weekly Newes," till the 28th of September, when we have,

"Newes from most parts of Christendom, &c. London: printed for Nathaniel Butter and William Sheffard."

This is the first time we meet with Butter's name in connexion with these newspapers; and it is still later (May 12th, 1623) that we find any system of numbering them adopted, when "The Newes of this present Week" of that date is numbered "31." If the publication of the "Weekly Newes" had been regular, even from May 23d of the previous year, this should have been No. 52; so we may infer that there were nineteen weeks when Butter and his fellow news printers found nothing to communicate, or that all the papers preserved were not belonging to one series.

After Butter's accession the appearance of the weekly sheet became more regular, and the title more irregular. It was variously "The Last News," "A Relation," &c., "The Weekly News continued," "More News," "Our Last News," &c.

Thus struggled on the first newspaper, not without trouble and difficulty. It had to contend against prejudice, ridicule, and the jealousy of the news correspondents. Of the first, Ben Jonson seems to express the opinion of many of the old stagers of the time, which he describes as "hungering and thirsting after published pamphlets of news, set out every Saturday, but made all at home, and no syllable of truth in them; than which there cannot be a greater disease in nature, nor scorn put upon the time." The "Times Newes" he describes as "a weekly cheat to draw money; and at last, in his 'Staple of News,' produced in 1625, and dealing particularly hard blows at Butter, he breaks forth:—

> "See divers men's opinions! Unto some
> The very printing of 'em makes them news,
> That have not the heart to believe anything
> But what they see in print;"

a passage which Gifford, in his Notes, explains—"Credulity, which was then at its height, was irritated rather than fed by impositions of every kind, and the country kept in a feverish state of deceptive excitement by stories of wonderful events gross and palpable."

In fact, not only the "Staple of News," but also Fletcher's "Fair Maid of the Inn," and Shirley's "Love Tricks," bear hard upon Butter and his colleagues. But then came a trouble upon them greater than all these—the licenser, who appears to have taken little notice of them before, perhaps not thinking they came within his province or were worthy of his attention. The irregularities in the publication may be attributable to the interference of this functionary, and probably some numbers were suppressed,

or a license for them refused. In 1640, however, a change took place, which Butter cheerfully notifies after a silence of five weeks:

"The continuation of the forraine occurrents for 5 weekes last past, containing many remarkable passages of Germany, &c. Examined and licensed by a better and more impartiall hand than heretofore. London: printed January 11, 1640, for Nathaniel Butter, dwelling at St. Austin's-gate.

"The Printer to the Reader:

"Courteous reader! we had thought to have given over printing our foreign avisoes, for that the licenser (out of a partial affection) would not oftentimes let pass apparent truth, and in other things (oftentimes) so crosse, and alter, which made us weary of printing; but he being vanished, (and that office fallen upon another more understanding in these forraine affaires, and as you will find more candid) we are againe (by the favour of his Maiestie and the state) resolved to go on printing if we shall find the world to give a better acceptation of them (than of late), by their weekly buying them. It is well known these novels are well esteemed in all parts of the world (but heere) by the more judicious, which we can impute to no other but the discontinuance of them and the uncertaine daies of publishing them, which, if the poste fail us not, we shall keep a constant day everie weeke therein, whereby everie man may constantly expect them, and so we take leave. January the 9th, 1640."

One thing is herein to be observed—the editorial "WE" was already adopted by "the printer to the reader." The printer was then, and continued long afterwards to be, the ostensible director of the paper; all letters, in the newspapers of a century later, being addressed "to the printer," until about 1740, when they were occasionally addressed "to the author."

But the licenser, the "failing of the poste," or, worse

than all, the indifference of the public, were too much for poor Butter, for the number containing his hopeful announcement was, if not the last published, at all events the latest of his newspapers which have been preserved; the "Weekly Newes" could hardly have survived long afterwards without some copies having been handed down to us.

Butter appears to have been a collector of news before he conceived the idea of a printed periodical news sheet, and to have at one time followed the occupation of a correspondent. He then traded in the pamphlets of news, and the "Newes from Spaine," published in 1611, was "imprinted at London for Nathaniel Butter," a small quarto of twelve pages. In one of his "Weekly Newes" he describes himself as a "transcriber," and makes allusion to two earlier numbers, which he seems to have thrown out as feelers:—

"If any gentleman, or other accustomed to buy the *weekly* relations of newes, be desirous to continue the same, let them know that the writer, or transcriber rather, of this newes, hath published two former Newes, the one dated the second, the other the thirteenth of August, all which do carry a like title, with the arms of the King of Bohemia on the other side of the title-page, and have dependence one upon another; which manner of writing and printing he doth purpose to continue weekly, by God's assistance, from the best and most certain intelligence. Farewell, this twenty-three of August, 1622."

One of the "two former Newes" to which he alludes was most likely "The Courant, or Weekly Newes from Forain Partes," a half sheet, dated October 9th, 1621, and purporting to be "taken out of the high Dutch," and printed "by N. Butter."

The "Weekly Newes" was not Butter's only speculation of the sort. In 1630 we find him publishing half-yearly volumes of intelligence, under the title of "The

German Intelligencer," and in 1631 "The Swedish Intelligencer," both compiled from the "Weekly Currantoes" of the respective countries, by William Watts, of Caius College. Anthony à Wood gives a biographical notice of this early English editor, from which it appears that he was a native of Lynn, in Norfolk; that he possessed good influence, and was rising in the Church, when the civil wars destroyed all his prospects. He was a steady Royalist, and, as such, suffered sequestration, was left destitute with a wife and family, and finally died, in 1649, on board Prince Rupert's fleet, in Kinsale Harbour. He was a learned writer, but our business with him is as an editor of news books, of which Wood says he published, before the civil wars, "several numbers in the English tongue [more than forty], containing the occurrences done in the wars between the King of Sweden and the Germans." These were, no doubt, the publications of Butter.

The last connexion of Butter with the publication of news, as far as we can trace it, is in 1641, a year after we have lost sight of the "Weekly Newes." It is in a pamphlet of five quarto pages, entitled, "Warranted Tidings from Ireland," which issued from his press in that year; and there we must take our leave of him, as we have no further particulars of his proceedings, except that his sign was "The Pyde Bull," and that his shop was situated in St. Austin's-gate, St. Paul's-churchyard.

Dodsley, in a note to May's comedy of "The Heir," asserts that the first newspaper published in England was called *Gallo-Belgicus*, "as early as the reign of Queen Elizabeth," and quotes Carew's "Survey of Cornwall," published in 1602, which alludes to *Mercurius Gallo-Belgicus*. Doctor Donne, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and Clapthorne also mention this paper; but the fact is, as Mr. Chalmers shows, that *Gallo-Belgicus* was a foreign paper, printed, the first part at Cologne, in 1598, and the second at Frankfort, in 1605. It is singular that we now have to

ignore Chalmers's own assertion that "the epoch of the Spanish Armada is also the epoch of a genuine [English] newspaper," and to transfer the credit to honest Butter and his unpretending "Weekly Newes."

Butter appears also to have called into existence the "mercury women," of whom we hear so often in old plays, as the hawkers of newspapers, for one of the MSS. in the Harleian collection (Cod. 5,910) says that towards the latter end of the reign of James I. news began to be in fashion, "and then, if I mistake not, began the use of mercurie women, and they it was that dispersed them to the hawker. These mercuries and hawkers, their business at first was to disperse proclamations, orders of council, acts of parliament," &c.

Here, then, beside a history of the first newspapers, we may enshrine a memento of the first news vendors. In the forty years that succeeded—forty years of troublous times, of which few escaped the "boil and bubble" unscalded and unscathed—these poor people appear to have got into bad repute, for Sir Roger L'Estrange, in the Prospectus to his *Intelligencer*, in 1663, says of them :—

"The way as to the sale that has been found most beneficial to the master of the book has been to cry and expose it about the streets by mercuries and hawkers; but whether they may be so advisable in some other respects, may be a question, for, under countenance of that employment is carried on the private trade of treasonous and seditious libels; nor, effectually, has anything been dispersed against either Church or State without the aid and privity of this sort of people; wherefore, without ample assurance and security against this inconvenience, I shall adventure to steer another course."

Such was the class—here is a personal sketch :—

"A hotte combat lately happened at the Salutation Taverne, in Holburne, where some of the Commonwealth vermin, called soldiers, had seized on an Amazonian virago, named Mrs. Strosse, upon suspicion of being a loyalist and

selling the *Man in the Moon* [a print of the king's party]; but she, by applying beaten pepper to their eyes, disarmed them, and with their own swordes forced them to aske her forgiveness, and down on their marybones, and pledge a health to the king and confusion to their masters; and so honorablie dismissed them. Oh! for twenty thousand such gallant spirits; when you see that one woman can beat two or three!"—*Man in the Moon*, July 4, 1649.

Thus does Mrs. Strosse help us on—we have the first *martyr* of news—the first *printer* of newspapers—the first *editor;* and now comes forward our "Amazonian virago," with her beaten pepper, to claim her place as a type of the first *sellers* of newspapers.

The writers on newspaper history have copied each other in adopting Ben Jonson's characters of the early news writers as delineated in his "Staple of News," with all the absurd exaggerations of the way in which the news book was compiled, which might serve, indeed, to illustrate the common opinion of the new introduction, but not the true character of it; for it is so palpable a caricature that we do not feel disposed to imitate our predecessors in quoting "Rare Ben's" facetious description, but refer those who seek the dark side of the news writer's portrait to what they have all overlooked—"The Character of a Diurnal Maker," in the Harleian Manuscripts, Codex 5910, and the "New Year's Gift to Mercurius Politicus" (referring to a few years' later date), and "The Carman's Poem, or Advice to a Nest of Scribblers," which follow it in the same volume, in the former of which the writer, after elaborately blackening the diurnal scribe, sums up a description of his works thus contemptuously: "A library of Diurnals is a wardrobe of Frippery!"

The titles which these publications assumed were certainly not calculated to elevate them in the public estimation. We select a few of the most eccentric from the British Museum collections:—

"Newes, and Strange Newes from St. Christopher's of a

Tempestuous Spirit which is called by the Indians a Hurrycano or Whirlwind; whereunto is added the True and Last Relations (in verse) of the Dreadful Accident which happened at Witticombe, in Devonshire, 21 October, 1638." 12mo, with a woodcut, 1638.

"Newes, true Newes, laudable Newes, Citie Newes, Countrie Newes, the World is Mad or it is a Mad World, my Masters, especially now when, in the Antipodes, these things are come to passe." London: 1642. 4to.

"Newes from Hell and Rome, and the Innes of Court." London: 1642. 4to.

"The Best Newes that ever was Printed." London: 1643. 4to.

"No Newes, but a Letter to Everybody." By R. W. 1648. 4to.

The most perfect set of newspapers of this date (which we have not ourselves seen) is mentioned in a note by Chalmers as being in the collection of Mr. Charles Tooker, and entitled "The Weekly Account," from 1634 to 1655.

These news books are now diligently sought by collectors and antiquaries, and command high prices. The "Newes, and Strange Newes from St. Christopher's" was sold at the Gordonstown sale for 1*l.* 8*s.*: "Newes from the North" (1579), at the Roxburghe sale, for 12*l.* 12*s.*: "Newes from Spaine" (1618), at Fonthill, for 1*l.* 1*s.*: "Newes out of Cheshire" (1600), by Bindley, for 2*l.* 11*s.*: "Newes from Gravesend" (1604), by Sotheby, for 1*l.* 3*s.*: "Newes from Lough Foyle in Ireland" (1608), by King and Lochée, for 14*s.* 6*d.*: "Weekly Newes and Affairs of Europe" (1622-5), by the same auctioneers, for 2*l.* 2*s.* (3 volumes); "Newes from Rome," by Inglis, for 16*s.*: "Woful Newes from the West parts of England" (1612), by Bindley, for 12*s.*; &c.*

* Lowndes' "Bibliographer's Manual," vol. iii. pp. 1331-2.

CHAPTER IV.

THE "MERCURIES"—THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS—THE FIRST MERCURY—TITLES OF "MERCURIES"—MERCURY WRITERS: NEDHAM, BIRKENHEAD, HEYLIN, RYVES, WITHER, TAYLOR THE WATER POET, BOOKER, WHARTON, AND HOTHAM—CHARACTER OF THE MERCURIES—THE TRAVELLING PRESS—THE FIRST ADVERTISEMENT—THE FIRST ILLUSTRATED PAPER—DAWN OF THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF NEWSPAPERS—SPECIMENS OF THE POLITICAL ARTICLES, AND OF THE NEWS.

THE newspapers had now begun to assume that title which so closely identifies them with the memories of the civil wars —"Mercurius." But there were "Mercuries" of earlier date than those elicited by that hot and fierce struggle of opinion; for our friend Butter published, in 1636, "The principal Passages of Germany, Italy, France, and other places; all faithfully taken out of good originals by an English Mercury;" and, still earlier, in 1625, his *Weekly Newes* is stated to be "Printed for Mercurius Britannicus." But the title "Mercurius" belongs, *par excellence*, to the news sheets of the contending armies—the ribaldry of Birkenhead, the mercenary tirades of Nedham, or the furious onslaughts of men less conspicuous of their parties.

The collection presented to the British Museum by George III., and formed (at the cost, as was estimated, of 4,000*l.*) by the Rev. G. Thomasson during the Commonwealth, among a vast number of tracts, squibs, and pamphlets, is perhaps the most complete in "Mercuries;" and there are collections in the libraries of All Souls and of Corpus Christi Colleges, Oxford. They absolutely swarmed during the earlier part of the intestine struggle that gave them birth. Peter Heylin says, in the preface to his "Cosmography," "The affairs of each town, or war, were

presented in the weekly news books," and the single year 1643 begot no less than twenty of them. Mr. Nichols's list up to 1665 gives the title of 350 news books, diurnals, and Mercuries, of which the latter are by far the most numerous, especially from the years 1643 to 1654. Thomasson's collection comes down no further than 1657, the collector assigning as a reason for discontinuing his "great pains and labour," that the publications had, at that date, become less numerous and interesting.

The abolition of the Star-chamber in 1641 acted like a genial thaw upon the frozen energies of the Press, and, of course, the particular branch of its productions of which we treat was not the last to rise up, shake itself, look around, and start off into all sorts of gambols of a new-found liberty—hence the eccentric publications, which, taking the title of Mercuries, purported to bring their satires from heaven, from hell, from the moon, and from the antipodes—calling themselves doves, kites, vultures, and screech-owls, laughing mercuries, crying mercuries, merry diurnals, and smoking nocturnals.

But hence, also—and it is the first time, as far as we can find, that the people were entrusted with the secret—hence sprung the publication of the proceedings of Parliament, and, in 1641, appeared "The Diurnal Occurrences, or Daily Proceedings of both Houses in this great and happy Parliament, from the 3rd of November, 1640, to the 3rd of November 1641. London: Printed for William Cooke, and are to be sold at his shop at Furnivall's Inne Gate, in Holbourne, 1641."

This appears to have been a summary for a year, introducing the subject, and, after "The Speeches in Parliament from 3rd November, 1640, to June, 1641," in two volumes (534 pages), the "Diurnal Occurrences" began to be brought out weekly by William Cooke and John Thomas. In 1642 there came out "The Heads of all the Proceedings of both Houses of Parliament;" "A Perfect Diurnal of

the Passages in Parliament, &c.;" which were weekly reports of the votes, or of intelligence communicated to the Parliament. Thus was the right of the people to know what was being done for them—or against them—by their senators first acknowledged; and thus did the Press first assume a function, which it has performed, with but few intermissions, ever since with increasing honour to itself and security to the nation. These early diurnals, it must be remembered, were published by authority, so that their "Account of Proceedings" was very different to the elaborate, fearless, and word-for-word reports of the present day; but the first step of the bastion had been yielded to the storming party—and they were mounting.

Now was the ever-ready Butter again busy, and, in 1641, we find him turning his attention to this newly-developed branch of news:—

"The Passages in Parliament from the 3 of Jan. to the 10, more fully and exactly taken than the ordinary one hath beene, as you will find upon comparing. And although the weeke past doth yeeld many remarkable passages (as hath beene any weeke before), yet you shall expect no more expression either now or hereafter in the title then the Passages in Parliament, &c. London: Printed for Nath. Butter, at St. Austin's Gate in Paul's Churchyard, at the signe of the Pyde Bull, 1641."

Every good has its attendant evil, and the same concession that gave the nation a glimpse into parliamentary affairs, encouraged the tribe of party writers to exhaust their energies in a shoal of licentious diurnals and Mercuries.

The title of *Mercurie* seems to have been imported from France—at least, the earliest use which we have been enabled to find of it is in that country, in the year 1613, when there appeared in Paris the *Mercure François*, which continued to be published until 1647. In 1643 there was also published in Paris the *Mercure Suisse*; and in Geneva, the *Mercure d'Etat*; whilst the word was

not generally adopted by the English news writers until about 1643, and the purposes to which it was then devoted, and the epithets to which it was allied, must surely have somewhat astonished even our lively neighbours. The price was usually one penny, as we find stated in No. I. of the *Spie* (January 23d to 30th, 1644), and, we believe, it never exceeded twopence.

As specimens of the most ridiculous of this class, we may give three, which we have found in the British Museum collection:—

"The Marine Mercurie; or, a true relation of the strange appearance of a Man-Fish, about three miles within the River Thames, having a Mosket in one hand and a Petition in the other. With a Relation of Sir Simon Hartley's Victory over the Rebels," 4to, 1642.

"A Preter-pluperfect Spick-and-span new Nocturnal; or, Mercurie's Weekly Night Newes," 1645.

"A Wonder! A Mercurie without a Lye in his Mouth," 4to, 1648.

The collection of "Mercuries" contained in the library of Corpus Christi College bear the respective designations of "Academicus" (1645), "Anti-Britannicus" (1645)—the title of this, by the way, merely meant that it was opposed to "Mercurius Britannicus,"—"Aquaticus" (1653), "Aulicus" (1642), "Democritus" (1653), "Menipeus" (1682), "Politicus" (1659), and "Publicus" (1660).

In the Bodleian Library we have found the following:—

"Mercurius Propheticus; or, a Collection of some old Predictions. O! may they only prove but empty fictions," 1643.

"Mercurius Psitacus; or, the Parotting Mercury," 1648.

"Mercurius non Vendicus nor yet Mutus, but Cambro, or Honest Britannus," 1644.

"Newes from Smith the Oxford Gaoler," 1645.

From Chalmers's List we quote a few of the most remarkable titles:—

"The Parliament's Scout's Discovery," 1643.

"Wednesday's Mercury; or, Special Passages. Collected for those who wish to be informed," 1643.

"The Spie; communicating Intelligence from Oxford," 1643.

"Mercurius Fumigosus; or, the Smoaking Nocturnal," 1644.

"The Kingdom's Scout," 1645.

"Mercurius Medicus; or, a Sovereign Salve for these Sick Times," 1647.

"Mercurius Melancholicus; or, News from Westminster and other Parts," 1647.

"Mercurius Pragmaticus: Communicating Intelligence from all Partes, touching all Affaires, Designes, Humours, and Conditions, throughout the Kingdome, especially from Westminster and the Head Quarters," 1647.

"Mercurius Clericus; or, Newes from Syon," 1647.

"Mercurius Anti-Pragmaticus," 1647.

"Mercurius Bellicus; or, an Alarm to all Rebels," 1647.

"The Parliament's Kite; or, the Tell-Tale Bird," 1648.

"The Parliament's Vulture: Newes from all Parts of the Kingdom," 1648.

"The Parliament's Screech-Owle; or, Intelligence from several Parts," 1648.

"The Parliament's Porter; or, the Door-Keeper of the House of Commons," 1648.

"Mercurio Volpone; or, the Fox. For the better Information of His Majestie's loyal Subjects; prying into every Junto, proclaiming their Designs, and reforming all Intelligence," 1648.

"A Trance; or, News from Hell brought fresh to Town, by Mercurius Acheronticus," 1648.

"The Man in the Moon, discovering a World of Knavery under the Sunne," 1649.

"Great Britain's Paine full Messenger," 1649.

"The Faithful Scout," 1650.

"Mercurius Democritus; or, a Nocturnal. Communicating wonderful News from the World in the Moon," 1652.

"Mercurius Heraclitus; or, the Weeping Philosopher," 1652.

"Mercurius Mastix; faithfully lashing all Scouts, Mercuries, Posts, Spyes, and others," 1652.

"The Laughing Mercury; or, True and Perfect News from the Antipodes," 1652.

"Mercurius Radamanthus, the Chief Judge of Hell; his Circuits through all the Courts of Law in England," 1653.

The extensive collection of Mr. Nichols affords us some remarkable specimens, a few of which we copy:—

"Mr. Peter's Report from the Army," 1645.

"Mercurius Diabolicus; or, Hell's Intelligencer," 1647.

"Mercurius Mercuriorum Stultissimus," 1647.

"Mercurius Britannicus again Alive," 1648.

"Mercurius Anti-Mercurius," 1648.

"Martin Nonsense, his Collections," 1648.

"Mercurius Insanus Insanissimus," 1648.

"The Flying Eagle," 1652.

"Mercurius Nullus," 1653.*

It were useless to force upon the reader's notice more samples of these mad news sheets: we have given quite sufficient to enable him to appreciate the quality and style of them; but, worthless as they now appear, they had great weight in their day, and, instead of being the mere froth that rose to the surface, they in a great measure caused and kept up the fermentation which was at work in the country. Some of them, it cannot be denied, were

* The dates affixed to these titles are generally those borne by the first number.

written with talent, withering with their sarcasm, stabbing with their irony, or pounding with their denunciations the parties against whom they were levelled. Undoubtedly the most clever were those written by Marchmont Nedham, and especially the *Mercurius Britannicus*, and the *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, which Anthony à Wood assigns to him. Wood's account of this writer has been assailed as partial—and no doubt it is so—but there can be little respect felt for a partisan who thrice changed his principles during the great struggle in which he took part—for this fact, we believe, his apologists have not been able to contradict, but feebly excuse it on the pretence that he did it "to save his neck." A poor plea, surely!

Marchmont Nedham, the great writer of "Mercuries," was born at Burford, in 1620, and educated at Oxford. On coming to London he became first an usher at Merchant Taylors' School, and then an under-clerk of Gray's Inn. He afterwards studied physic and chemistry; but in the middle of August, 1643, he started the celebrated republican print *Mercurius Britannicus*, which he continued every Monday until the close of 1646; and gained much popularity by it, and became known as Captain Nedham of Gray's Inn. Anthony à Wood can, however, see no merit in it, but held Nedham in fierce scorn; possibly he was right too, for demagogues look much better at a distance of time, when some kind friend of an historian has washed their faces and patched their shreds. "Siding with the rout and scum of the people, he made them weekly sport by railing at all that was noble in his Intelligence called *Mercurius Britannicus*, wherein his endeavours were to sacrifice the fame of some lord, or any person of quality, and of the king himself, to the beast with many heads." He presently got imprisoned for a seditious libel, and, soliciting an audience of the king, is said to have made a most abject apology on his knees and procured his liberty. He now assumed the

character of a furious Royalist, and, on September 14, 1647, started the *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, which he continued in the royal cause, with a short intermission, until 1649. President Bradshaw had sufficient influence over Nedham to win him back to the popular side, and on June 13, 1650, he commenced the *Mercurius Politicus*, which came out with some show of authority, "in defence of the Commonwealth and for information of the People," and continued for ten years. What was the exact amount of "authority" with which this publication was invested it is now difficult to determine: à Wood expressly says it "came out by authority," and an entry in the "Journals of the House of Commons" amply confirms him:—"1659. August 15th. Resolved: that Marchemont Nedham, gentleman, be, and is, hereby restored to be writer of the Publick Intelligence, as formerly." This would also seem to indicate that he had, for a time, forfeited the confidence of his republican employers.

The subsequent career of Nedham is a mere continuation of the old story. On the Restoration he was dismissed from the public service by the Council of State; and Giles Dury and Henry Muddiman appointed to his post. He succeeded in effecting his escape to Holland, "conscious," says à Wood, "that he might be in danger of the halter;" but subsequently he procured a pardon under the great seal by means of a bribe "given to a hungry courtier." After practising for some time as a physician in London, with indifferent success, he died obscurely in Devereux-court, in November, 1678.

Another contemporary authority is no more favourable to Nedham, "whose scurrilous pamphlets," he says, "flying every week into all parts of the nation, 'tis incredible what influence they had upon numbers of unconsidering people, who have a strange presumption that all must needs be true that is in print. This was the Goliah of the Philistines; the great champion of the late-

usurper, whose pen was, in comparison with the others, like a weaver's beam." *

Contemporary with and antagonistic to Nedham, was John Birkenhead, the writer of the *Mercurius Aulicus*. Born about the year 1615, at Northwich, in Cheshire, and educated at Oriel College, he fell under the notice of Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom he ultimately became secretary, and fulfilled his office so much to the archbishop's satisfaction that he was, in 1639, created Master of Arts by diploma, and, in 1640, chosen probationer fellow of All Souls College. During his residence at Oxford, Charles I. fixed his head-quarters in that city, and selected Birkenhead to write the *Mercurius Aulicus* in 1642 (11th January), which he continued weekly for three years. This publication gaining him further notice, as well for the wit and talent displayed in it as on account of its principles, he was made reader of moral philosophy—a post from which he was removed, in 1648, by the Parliament visitors. He, however, did not desist from issuing satirical papers, although frequently imprisoned for their publication, until the Restoration, when he transferred his talents to a different sphere—the Senate—and sat in the House of Commons as member for the borough of Wilton; also receiving the degree of doctor of laws from the university. In 1642, he received the honour of knighthood, and in 1643 the more lucrative appointment of master of requests, with a salary of 3000*l.* a-year, "in which station," says Anthony à Wood, "he showed the baseness of his spirit, by slighting those who had been his benefactors in his necessities." He died in Westminster, December 4, 1679, and was buried at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

Birkenhead was assisted by a better man than either himself or Nedham—Peter Heylin. This "proud priest" was

* British Bibliographer, vol. i. p. 574.

born at Burford, in Oxfordshire* (the birthplace of Nedham), on November 29, 1599, and educated at Hart Hall, Oxford, afterwards procuring a fellowship of Magdalen. In 1628, he was appointed chaplain in ordinary to the king, and, in 1631, obtained a prebend at Westminster. In 1633, he took his degree of doctor of divinity, and obtained several preferments, but the flood of the republican triumphs washed them all away; his goods were confiscated, his livings sequestrated, and himself voted a delinquent. In this strait he fled to Oxford, where he was prevailed upon by the king to take part with Birkenhead in the writing of the *Mercurius Aulicus;* but his talents were of a higher order than this style of writing required, and his coadjutor's papers were the most popular. At the Restoration, he seems to have been slighted, only getting back his sub-deanery of Westminster, in which city he died, in 1662. Heylin was unquestionably a man of superior abilities to most of the "Mercury" writers, and left behind him works of a very different class, the "Cosmography," "History of the Reformation," "History of the Presbyterians," "Life of Archbishop Laud," &c.

Bruno Ryves, the author of the original *Mercurius Rusticus*, was born in Dorsetshire, made one of the clerks of New College in 1610, and, in 1616, one of the chaplains of Magdalen. Preferments crowded on him: he became vicar of Hanwell, Middlesex; rector of St. Martin's-de-la-Vintry, London; chaplain to the king; and, in 1639, doctor of divinity. But he lost his fat livings when the civil wars broke out, and entered the lists against the Presbyterians, a needy writer, on August 22, 1642, under the title of "Mercurius Rusticus; or, the Countrie's Complaint, recounting the Sad Events of this lamentable War." The

* Mr. Knight Hunt says at Pentrie Heylin, in Monmouthshire, but this is a mistake. Anthony à Wood says that his family was of that place, but that he was born at Burford. See also his Life, prefixed to Miscellaneous Tracts.

Restoration again changed his fortunes, and he was made chaplain in ordinary to the king, dean of Windsor, rector of Acton, in Middlesex, and scribe of the most noble Order of the Garter, which he lived to enjoy for seventeen years, dying in 1677. His "Mercury" has gone through four editions, the latest of which was published in 1723.

Ryves had an antagonist in George Wither, who conducted his attack on the principle described by Dr. Johnson. Speaking of these "Mercuries," the doctor says, "When any title grew popular, it was stolen by the antagonist, who, by this stratagem, conveyed his notions to those who would not have received him had he not worn the appearance of a friend." Thus insidiously did Wither smuggle his republican rhymes into the rival camp, under the friendly guise of Ryves's title, and brought out, in 1643, a rhyming, half-jesting "Mercury," called *Mercurius Rusticus*. Wither was born at Bentworth, near Alton, in Hampshire, June 11, 1588, sent to Magdalen College in 1604, and afterwards entered at Lincoln's Inn; but he soon courted the satiric muse, and got into prison for his first dalliance, the "Abuses Whipt and Stript." On the breaking out of the civil wars he sold his estates, and raised a troop of horse for the Parliament, in whose cause he started the *Mercurius Rusticus*, and wrote numerous lampoons and satires, in some of which he is said to have displayed considerable talent. But at the Restoration he was arrested for the publication of a "scandalous and seditious libel," and imprisoned in Newgate and the Tower for three years according to à Wood, and three-quarters of a year according to Aubrey. He died May 2, 1667, and was buried in the church of the Savoy, Strand.

John Taylor, the water-poet, essayed his hand at Mercury writing, and produced the *Mercurius Aquaticus*. This eccentric genius was born at Gloucester in 1580, and, on coming to London, was bound apprentice to a waterman, and while his sculls were resting he wrote and rhymed a folio volume

He left London on the outbreak of the rebellion, and betook himself to Oxford, where he opened a loyal tavern and wrote loyal songs, but, on the surrender of the city, he came back to London, and opened a tavern in Westminster with the sign of the Mourning Crown.

A gentle hint was, however, conveyed to him that this sign was not very palatable to his parliamentary neighbours, and he substituted for it his own portrait, with the inscription beneath it,

> "There's many a head stands for a sign;
> Then, gentle reader, why not mine?"

Poor Taylor did not live to see the reaction that brought his party again into favour, nor to share in the rewards that were scattered among them at the Restoration, but died at Westminster in 1654, at the ripe old age of seventy-four.

John Booker was the author of *Mercurius Cœlicus*, and a fair proportion of the scampish element he appears to have had in his composition. He was born at Manchester, in 1601, and, coming to London, set up as a writing-master in Hadley in Middlesex, and then practised as an astrologer, fortune-teller, and resolver of abstruse questions, till by dint of cunning and servility he procured the office of licenser of mathematical books, which, however, he did not keep long, and died in 1667.

Booker was opposed by George Wharton, a native of Westmoreland, also a professor of astrology, but a man of better character—who wrote the "Mercurio Cœlico Mastix; or, an Anti-Caveat to all such as have had the misfortune to be cheated and deluded by that great and treacherous impostor, John Booker." This was a mere libel, but Wharton was also a writer of political "Mercuries" in the interest of the Royalists, in whose cause he embarked and lost his patrimony; for which, at the Restoration, he was, according to Granger, rewarded with a baronetcy and the post of treasurer of the ordnance. He died in 1681.

"The Spie communicating Intelligence from Oxford," which was commenced on January 30, 1643-4, was written by Durant Hotham, of whom we know no more than that he was a son of Sir John Hotham.

Such, then, were some of the worthies who wrote the "Mercuries." Those whose lives we have sketched were the most eminent, and, with all their faults and shortcomings, the most respectable. The lower class of Mercury writers were a shameless set of hireling scribblers; ignorant, unprincipled, and contemptible. They sold their pens or extorted bribes, according to the temper of the party they attacked, and lauded a man up to the skies for a meal, or flung him under the feet of the mob for refusing them one. Let Mrs. Hutchinson bear witness against them. "Sir John Gell, of Derbyshire," says that lady, in her "Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson," "kept the diurnal makers in pension, so that whatever was done in the neighbouring counties against the enemy was attributed to him, and thus he hath indirectly purchased himself a name in story which he never merited. Mr. Hutchinson, on the other side, that did well for virtue's sake, and not for the vaine glory of it, never would give aniething to buy the flatteries of those scribblers; and, when one of them once, while he was in towne, made mention of something done at Nottingham with falschood, and had given Gell the glory of an action in which he was not concerned, Mr. Hutchinson rebuked him for it; whereupon the man begged his pardon, and told him he would write as much for him the next weeke; but Mr. Hutchinson told him he scorned his mercenary pen, and warned him not to dare to be in any of his concernements, whereupon the fellow was awed, and he had no more abuse of that kind."

Those "Mercuries" which emanated from authority were printed in the camps of the respective armies. The newspaper press had become peripatetic, and sent forth its intelligence from head-quarters, now at Oxford, and next,

week at Worcester. Thus King Charles carried Robert Barker, as his news printer, up as far as Newcastle, in 1639; and in 1652, Christopher Higgins accompanied Cromwell, in the same capacity, to Leith.

There appear to have been no "Mercuries" of more frequent appearance than thrice a week—certainly none of daily publication. At first, in fact, they only came out weekly; and in the most exciting part of the contest there were only a few which were circulated oftener—twice or thrice a week. The public had to wait a month even for some of them, as,

"An Exact and True Collection of Weekly Passages, to show the Error of the Weekly Pamphlets; by Authority. To be communicated from month to month, 1646."

"The True Informer; or, Monthly Mercury. Being the Certain Intelligence of 'Mercurius Militaris.' To be continued monthly, 1648."

"The Irish Monthly Mercury, 1650."

It was during all the confusion of this great intestine strife, when one would have thought that enterprise was paralysed and the pages of the "Mercuries" fully occupied with controversy and recrimination, that the first advertisement appeared. The Quarterly Review (June, 1855) quotes an announcement of an heroic poem, called "Irenodia Gratulatoria," which appeared in the *Mercurius Politicus* of January, 1652, as the oldest of the great family of advertisements, and gives the credit to the booksellers of being the first to discover the use of the newspaper for this purpose. But the Quarterly Reviewer is in error. Mr. Nichols found in the first number of the *Impartial Intelligencer* (March 1 to 7, 1648) an advertisement from a gentleman at Candish, in Suffolk, offering a reward for two horses that had been stolen from him. For ten years this famous anonymous of "Candish, in Suffolk," found but few imitators, and those, without exception, only among booksellers and vendors of quack medicines; but, in 1657, Newcomb,

of Thames-street, appears to have awakened to the possibility of these advertisements being made a source of income to a newspaper; and, on May 26, he made the experiment with the *Public Advertiser*, which is almost entirely filled with advertisements and shipping intelligence. But he had them all to himself, and the other newspapers jogged quietly on with their three or four advertisements stuck in the middle of the sheet. We are tempted to draw one of these modest little notices from its hiding-place in the *Mercurius Politicus* of September 30, 1658:—

"That Excellent, and by all Physicians approved *China* Drink, called by the *Chineans, Tcha,* by other Nations *Tay, alias Tee,* is sold at the *Sultaness' Head Cophee House,* in *Sweeting's* Rents, by the Royal Exchange, *London.*"

The other advertisements in the "Mercuries" are of books published; apprentices, servants, or black boys absconded; or of coaches setting out from London, on great and perilous journeys, into the provinces.

The first illustrated newspaper was also a "Mercury," the *Mercurius Civicus: London's Intelligencer,* which appeared in 1643, and contained a variety of woodcuts. No. III. May 28, in reporting a vote of Parliament relating to the queen, favours the public with a portrait of her majesty; and No. CLII, April 30th, 1646, has two blurred and blotted woodcut portraits, respectively headed "Chas. Rex" and "Sir Thos. Fairfax."

We have, we think, now said all that has to be said—more, perhaps, than they deserved—about these remarkable hebdomadals, which took into their hands all the former functions of the newspaper, and assumed new ones, and yet were different from all that a newspaper had been—comets and blazing stars in the political firmament, shooting along their eccentric paths and setting the world on fire. And yet in them may be first recognised the rising of the newspaper press into a political power:—the old "newes bookes" had not meddled with politics, but were

content with monsters: the "Mercuries" despised gossip, and rode upon the whirlwind of party strife. Many of them did good service to their parties; and their parties, when in the ascendant, did good service to their authors; and thus were the writers of newspapers for the first time recognised and rewarded by governments.

The political articles of the most respectable of them were not always in the best taste; the acrimony of feeling which existed poisoned the pens of the authors, and natural deformities, domestic bereavements, private afflictions, were freely dragged forward and caught up as weapons of offence, when the passions were up and argument flung aside. Thus we find, in the *Mercurius Aulicus* of Birkenhead, an exulting article on the probability of Hampden's wounds proving mortal, and declaring, as its author had often before declared, that his home troubles—the loss of two or three daughters successively—were the judgments of Heaven upon his political sins.

While the political department shared in the fierce and angry passions of the times, the articles of intelligence partook of their superstitious and credulous character, and much of the news contained in the "Mercuries" was of the stamp of the following:—

"A perfect Mermaid was, by the last great winde, driven ashore nere Greenwich, with her combe in one hande and her lookinge-glasse in the other. She seemed to be of the countenance of a most faire and beautiful woman, with her armes crossed, weeping out many pearly drops of salt tears; and afterwards, she, gently turning herself upon her back againe, swamme away without being seen any more."

This choice piece of news we copy from "Mercurius Democritus; or, a True and Perfect Nocturnal," No. LXXX. Nov. 2, 1653.

CHAPTER V.

THE LICENSING SYSTEM—RESTRICTIONS ON NEWSPAPERS—LETTER FROM FAIRFAX TO THE PARLIAMENT—THE PARLIAMENT PERSECUTING THE PRESS—THE LICENSERS: BROWNE, MABBOT, BIRKENHEAD, L'ESTRANGE, FROST, AND THURLOW—DAWN OF THE RESTORATION—THE FIRST NEWSPAPER-OFFICE—CHARACTER OF THE NEWSPAPERS—DISPUTE WITH THE IRISH PARLIAMENT—L'ESTRANGE THE SOLE PRINTER OF NEWS—THE "PUBLIC INTELLIGENCER" AND THE "NEWS" ESTABLISHED—THEIR OPENING ADDRESS, AND CONTENTS—THE FIRST "OWN CORRESPONDENTS"—COFFEE-HOUSES AND NEWSPAPERS—THE "OXFORD GAZETTE" ESTABLISHED—FOUNDATION OF THE "LONDON GAZETTE"—THE FIRST GAZETTEER—CHARLES PERROT—TRANSLATION OF THE "GAZETTE" INTO FRENCH.

In traversing the almost untravelled waste of newspaper history, we must be guided by the landmarks which here and there stand out, and have been set up by previous adventurers upon some point which is defined and settled, picking up as we go the stray facts which we may find scattered upon the way. The landmarks we have thus gained and passed are Butter's *Weekly Newes* and the "Mercuries," and we are now pushing on for the *London Gazette*, which we discern in the distance; but some unconsidered trifles still lie at our feet, of which we must clear our path. The first we stumble upon is a stumbling-block that many a news-printer tripped over—the arbitrary power of the licensers.

The licensing of newspapers gave rise, in due course, to authorised, privileged, and, at last, official journals; so that, in tracing that system from its commencement, we are tracing to its earliest source, and the causes out of which it grew, the *London Gazette*, to the foundation of

which we propose to carry up our history in the present chapter.

Finding that the people would have news, and that all their efforts were useless in thwarting them, and seeing what trash was issued to appease this new craving of the people—trash, too, which was likely to cause the ruling powers great embarrassment—the government thought it best to set before the public a dish of its own concoction, not so highly seasoned, but composed of just such ingredients as it suited its purpose to give them; but before this could be effectually done, the news-sheets of more attractive, because more spicy matter, had to be got out of the way—and they were got out of the way by the licensing system.

As might be expected, the first attempt at suppressing these papers—many of them, it must be confessed, ribald and licentious—emanated from the Church, which did not yet clearly comprehend that it was right or safe that the people should be informed. On July 11th, 1637, Archbishop Laud procured a decree limiting the number of master printers to twenty, and visiting with the pillory and whipping any one who should print without a license. This seems to have placed Butter for a time in eclipse, for we miss his name from the list of the twenty privileged printers.

This was not the earliest notice we find of a censorship of the press, for Henry VIII. and Elizabeth were particularly jealous of its power; but it was the first which interfered with the newspaper press, and the *Weekly Newes* was, as we have seen, sorely troubled by it. In 1642 we find the clerk of the parliament vested with the power of licensing, and the *True Diurnal of Parliamentary Intelligence* bears the signature, "Jo. Browne, Cler. Parliamentor." In October, 1645, the *Kingdom's Weekly Post* appears "*according to order*," and in January, 1646, we have "An Exact and True Collection of Weekly Passages to show the Errors of the Weekly Pamphlets:" "*by*

Authority." Still the number of unlicensed news-sheets increased, and on September the 21st, 1647, Sir Thomas Fairfax addressed a letter of remonstrance to the House of Lords, requesting that steps should be taken for suppressing them; "and yet" (the days of a government *Gazette* are dawning) "that the kingdom's expectation may be satisfied, in relation to intelligence, till a firm peace be settled, considering the mischiefs that will happen by the poisonous writings of evil men, sent abroad daily to abuse and deceive the people, that, if the House shall see it fit, some two or three sheets may be permitted to come forth weekly, which may be licensed, and have some stamp of authority with them; and, in respect of the former licenser, Mr. Mabbot hath approved himself faithful in that service of licensing, and likewise in the service of the Houses and of this army, I humbly desire that he may be restored and continued in the same place of licenser."

It was clearly time some steps were taken to restrain the press within moderate bounds, and it was but wise, when the nation was torn and distracted by internal convulsions, to do that which, under other circumstances, would be treason to the constitution of the country. The parliament *did* interfere, and on the 30th of September, 1647, an ordinance passed the House of Lords prohibiting any person from "making, writing, printing, selling, publishing, or uttering, or causing to be made, &c. any book, &c. &c. sheet or sheets of news whatsoever, except the same be licensed by both or either House of Parliament, with the name of the author, printer, and licenser affixed," under pain of a penalty on the writer of forty shillings, or forty days' imprisonment; twenty shillings on the printer, or twenty days' imprisonment, and the breaking up of his press and printing materials; and on the hawker a whipping as a rogue, and the seizure of his papers. In Whitelocke's "Memorials" we find a committee appointed, November 27th, 1647, "to find out the authors of

Mercurius Pragmaticus and *Mercurius Melancholicus*, to punish them, and the printers and sellers of them, and to seize the impressions of them" (vol. ii. p. 281).

Fairfax's suggestion was further adopted, and Gilbert Mabbot* appointed licenser.

We have in vain searched the pages of Anthony à Wood, Granger, Kippis, Chalmers, Watkins, Rose, and all the other biographical authorities extant, for any particulars of Mabbot; all we know is, that he resigned his post in May 1649, for reasons which do him credit. It is plain that he considered the stern necessity for a licenser of the press had passed over, and was for again letting it go unshackled. He considered the common law sufficient to avenge any literary outrage of which the papers might be guilty, and suggests that the authors and printers should therefore simply subscribe their names. He boldly proclaimed that a system of licensing (the urgent need of it having ceased) was unjust, arbitrary, and impolitic. It is equally plain that the working of it had been unsuccessful, for he asserts that "many thousands of scandalous and malignant pamphlets have been published with his name thereunto, as if he had licensed the same (though he never saw them), on purpose (as he conceives) to prejudice him in his reputation amongst the honest party of the nation."

The sincerity of his views he conscientiously proved by soliciting his discharge. "Mabbot," says Dr. Birch, in his "Life of Milton" (page 28), "continued in office till May 22d, 1649, when, as Whitelocke observes, 'upon his desire and reasons against licensing of books to be printed, he was discharged of that employment.'"

We do not find any successor immediately appointed. His resignation is thus accepted:—

"Mr. Mabbot hath long desired several members of the House, and lately the Council of State, to move the House

* Whitelocke, in his "Memorials," spells the name Mabbol and Mabbold.

that he might be discharged of licensing books for the future, upon the reasons following" (here follow the reasons, the substance of which we have given): "A committee of the Council of State being satisfied with these and other reasons of Mr. Mabbot concerning licensing, the Council of State reports to the House: upon which the House ordered this day that the said Mr. Mabbot should be discharged of licensing books for the future."—From "A Perfect Diurnal of some Passages in Parliament, and the Daily Proceedings of the Army under his Excellency the Lord Fairfax. From Monday, May 21, to Monday, May 28, 1649. Collected for the Satisfaction of Such as Desire to be truly Informed." No. CCCIV. page 2531.

The licensing now seems to have grown lax and desultory. "A Brief Relation of some Affairs and Transactions, Civil and Military" (No. IV. October 23d, 1649), was "Licensed by Gualtor Frost, Esquire, Secretary to the Council of State, according to the direction of the late Act." The "Perfect Diurnal of some Passages of the Armies in England and Ireland" (No. I. December 20 to 27, 1649—50) was "Licensed by the Secretary of the Army;" and then it becomes obscure, and a few papers come out "by order," "by authority," "*cum privilegio*," "with license," or "with allowance." In 1656 we meet with papers licensed by Thurlow, secretary to Cromwell, and who had himself commenced life as a political writer.

The Parliament occasionally made a feint of pushing matters to extremes, and we occasionally meet with such entries as the following:—

"28 December, 1652. Ordered that it be referred to the Council of State to take care for suppressing the weekly pamphlets, or any other books that go out to the dishonour of the Parliament and prejudice of the Commonwealth; and also to examine the authors, printers, and publishers of the books called *Mercurius Britannicus*,

and the *Scout*, or any other books of that nature; and that they have power to imprison the offenders, and to inflict such other punishment on them as they shall think fit; and Mr. Scott is to take especial care hereof."*

The pressure of the licensing system was, however, not yet very tight upon the newspaper press: it strangled political pamphlets and squeezed the venom out of political satires, but the periodical press continued to evade or to defy its power. Indeed, the government, finding the "Mercuries" and newspapers swarming, without license or authority, seems to have adopted no vigorous measures to restrain them, but to have trusted rather, in the latter years of the Protectorate, to having a sort of semi-official organ to counteract their influence. This organ was the *Mercurius Politicus* and the *Public Intelligencer* of Marchmont Nedham, which were in fact two editions of one paper,—the former appearing on the Thursday, the latter on the Monday of each week. In 1656, they are entered in the books of the Stationers' Company as the property of Thomas Newcombe, with the license of Secretary Thurlow; but on the 9th of April, 1660, they appeared as the property of Dury and Muddiman, with the license of the Council of State. This change is significantly accounted for in the following announcement in the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* of April 16, 1660. The reaction had taken place; the Commonwealth was no more; and poor Marchmont Nedham had worn every one of his disguises threadbare:—

"Whereas Marchmont Nedham, the author of the weekly news books, called *Mercurius Politicus* and the *Publique Intelligencer*, is, by order of the Council of State, discharged from writing or publishing any publique intelligence, the reader is desired to take notice, that, by order of the said council, Giles Dury and Henry Muddiman are authorised henceforth to write and publish the said intelligence, the one upon the Thursday, and the other upon

* "Journals of the House of Commons," vol. vii. p. 236.

the Monday, which they do intend to set out under the titles of *The Parliamentary Intelligencer* and *Mercurius Publicus*."

Nedham was off *to* Holland to save his neck, and Charles II. was on his way *from* Holland to receive a crown. In the next year, the last memory of the republican prints was effaced, and, the House being dissolved, the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* changed its name for the *Kingdom's Intelligencer*:—

"The Kingdom's Intelligencer of the Affairs now in agitation in England, Scotland, and Ireland, together with Foreign Intelligence; to prevent false News. By Authority. No. I. January 7, 1661."

It is about this time that we first hear of a newspaper having an office of its own. Up till now, the paper had simply borne the name of the printer, as "Printed for A. B. by R. Wood." But on June 30, 1659, we have No. I. of—

"A Particular Advice from the Office of Intelligence near the Old Exchange, printed for J. Macock." This paper was soon entitled "Occurrences from Foreign Parts, &c." And published by Authority.

With the Restoration, the censorship of the newspapers became more rigorous, and the distracted nation was so eager for rest that it accepted with resignation a monarch who gave himself up to his licentious passions and put its own in fetters. The act of 1662, "for preventing the frequent abuses in printing seditious, treasonable, and unlicensed books and pamphlets, and for regulating of printing and printing-presses," placed the different departments of literature under different licensing powers, and the newspapers fell under that of the Secretary of State. Had not the system of legislation throughout this "merry" reign been a continuous warfare against the liberties of the press, and indicated a lasting desire to destroy it, we should not, advocates though we are for its freedom, have

found much fault with this early act of Charles's parliament. The people were as anxious for repose from party strife as the king was—we have shown what manner of men wrote the "Mercuries" and many of the newspapers—and, to give time for angry passions to subside and while the fallen party yet had a prospect through their writers of disturbing the public peace, it might have been a wholesome restriction. We must, as nearly as may be, regard it in the same view as we should have done at the time, and bear in mind that the press and its conductors at that period were very different to the press and its conductors of which we are now so justly proud. Intestine strife and fraternal bloodshed had so long been the order of the day, that a patriotic government even would not have been backward in providing against the country being again disturbed by a set of reckless incendiaries and needy adventurers, who, moreover, opposed everything but proposed nothing. But unfortunately, this feeling of prince and parliament was not satisfied with measures of repression; instead of simply checking the licentiousness of the press, they endeavoured to extinguish the press altogether—to prevent fire, they would have put out the light and left the people in darkness.

A more pliant character than Mabbot was found in Sir John Birkenhead, who appears to have been invested for a time with the power of licensing; but another favourite of the court was aspiring to the office, and on June 3, 1663, a pamphlet appeared with the title of "Considerations and Proposals in order to the Regulation of the Press; together with diverse Instances of Treasonous and Seditious Pamphlets, proving the Necessity thereof. By Roger L'Estrange. London: printed by A. C."

We have gone carefully through this pamphlet, and find no particular mention made of newspapers, although, no doubt, they were included under the general designation of "libels." Milton, in his noble plea for the liberty of

unlicensed printing, makes no special allusion to newspapers, neither, indeed, do any other of the principal writers of the time upon that subject. This would lead us to the conclusion that they were not looked upon with much respect at present—in fact, we have evidence of the amount of esteem which they had won for themselves, in a pamphlet published in 1679,* entitled "A just Vindication of Learning and the Liberty of the Press" (page 12), in which they are placed in sorry company:—"Why must no writing, either in the behalf of such great matters as Liberty, Property, and Religion, or in the behalf of such small trifles as Funeral Tickets, Play House Bills, City Mercuries, Hackney Coach Bills, Quack Doctors' Bills, and the like, be printed without a license?" This was at the time when Mr. Nichols considers the character of the newspaper press had been so much improved by L'Estrange.

The pamphlet of Sir Roger had what was no doubt its intended effect, and in 1663 he was appointed licenser, a patent also being passed in August of that year giving him "all the sole privilege of writing, printing, and publishing all Narratives, Advertisements, Mercuries, Intelligencers, Diurnals, and other books of public intelligence."†

Although this patent was conferred in August, 1663, L'Estrange's first appearance on the books of the Stationers' Company in the character of licenser is on October 30.

The personal history of L'Estrange, the licenser and journalist, is rather favourable, for he was a man of learning and erudition, and whilst as licenser he suppressed the corrupt papers, which had run up as thick as weeds and as rank as thistles, as journalist he planted in their place tolerably fair specimens of newspapers, of a better and healthier stock than England had yet seen. Still all this is no justification of the line of policy which put into the

* A passage from this pamphlet is quoted in the "Fourth Estate," vol. i. p. 146, but by a typographical transposition the date is given as "1769."

† Bagford's Collections in Harleian MSS., 5,910, vol. ii.

hands of one man the privilege of writing one and suppressing all other public journals.

Roger L'Estrange was the youngest son of Sir Hammond L'Estrange, of Hunstanton Hall, Norfolk. He was born in 1616, and in 1644 was commissioned by the king to get Lynn, in Norfolk, out of the hands of the parliamentary troops. His secret mission was, however, discovered, and he fell into the hands of the enemy, by whom he was tried at Guildhall as a spy, and sentenced to death, but was reprieved, and lay unexecuted but unpardoned for four years, when he effected his escape to the Continent, after a vain attempt to raise the Royalists in Kent. On the passing of the Act of Indemnity in 1653, he ventured back, but had great difficulty in procuring his pardon, and lived in obscurity, if not poverty, until the return of Charles II. His connexion with the newspaper press we shall have to mention in its place; in 1687 we find him member of parliament and a knight, a translator of several classical works (among which were Cicero's Offices, Seneca's Morals, Æsop's Fables, &c.), and altogether a successful writer and politician; but in the reign of William and Mary he fell under the suspicion of the court and was but coldly treated; and he died in the shade, on September 11, 1704, and was buried in St. Giles's-in-the-Fields.

We have already said that the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* of 1659 had, in 1661, become the *Kingdom's Intelligencer*, and was a semi-official organ of the government. This, however, did not, in the opinion of the Irish parliament, justify it in publishing the debates of that body; and a singular dispute arose out of it between the Speaker, Audley Mervyn, and Sir Edward Nicholas, the Secretary of State, which commenced in a warm remonstrance from the former, dated July 9, 1662, and dictated by a committee appointed on the 7th, but the result of which we cannot trace further.* The *Kingdom's Intelligencer*, in its

* Commons' Journals (Irish), vol. ii. pp. 91—95.

turn, gave place to the *Public Intelligencer*, "published for the satisfaction and information of the people; with privilege; by Roger L'Estrange, Esq.," which first appeared on Monday, the 31st of August, 1663; and the *News*, a kind of Thursday edition of the same paper, as the *Mercurius Politicus* had been of its predecessor.

The prospectus of the *Intelligencer* furnishes us with some strange views of L'Estrange the licenser, who speaks apart from L'Estrange the journalist:—

"As to the point of printed intelligence, I do declare myself (as I hope I may in a matter left so absolutely indifferent, whether any or none), that, supposing the press in order, the people in their right wits, and news or no news to be the question, a public *Mercury* should never have my vote; because I think it makes the multitude too familiar with the actions and counsels of their superiors, too pragmatical and censorious, and gives them not only an itch, but a kind of colourable right and license to be meddling with the government. All which (supposing as before supposed), does not yet hinder but that, in this juncture, a paper of that quality may be both safe and expedient; truly if I should say necessary, perhaps the case would bear it; for certainly there is not anything which at this instant more imports his majesty's service and the publick than to redeem the vulgar from their former mistakes and delusions, and to preserve them from the like for the time to come; to both which purposes, the prudent management of a *Gazette** may contribute in a very high degree; for, besides that it is everybody's money, and, in truth, a great part of most men's study and business, it is none of the worst ways of address to the genius and humour of the common people, whose affections are much more capable of being tuned and wrought upon by convenient

* The choice of this term must have been accidental, and suggested by the Venetian papers or the Paris official papers. There had been no papers in England using the title, it being first imported for the use of the *Oxford Gazette*.

hints and touches in the shape and air of a pamphlet, than by the strongest reason and best notions imaginable under any other and more sober form whatsoever. To which advantages of being popular and grateful, must be added as none of the least, that it is likewise seasonable, and worth the while, were there no other use of it than only to detect and disappoint the malice of those scandalous and false reports which are daily contrived and bruited against the government. So that, upon the main, I perceive the thing requisite; (for aught I can see yet) once a week may do the business, for I intend to utter my news by weight, and not by measure. Yet, if I shall find, when my hand is in, and after the planting and securing of my correspondents, that the matter will fairly furnish more, without either uncertainty, repetition, or impertinence, I shall keep myself free to double at pleasure. One book a week may be expected, however, to be published every Thursday, and finished upon the Tuesday night, leaving Wednesday entire for the printing of it off."

He had not long "got his hand in," and "planted" his correspondents, than he "doubled," and the *News* was the result, according to the arrangement previously described. By the way, this is the first time we hear of newspaper correspondents, in our present understanding of the term—the regular newspapers before the Commonwealth only purported to be translations or extracts from private letters.

And so we are indebted for a government organ to the necessity of "tuning" and playing upon the affections, "genius, and humour of the common people." Very candid, upon my word, Mr. L'Estrange!

At a later period of his connexion with newspapers, L'Estrange still clings to the same opinions, and particularly ignores their right to meddle with things parliamentary, objecting to it on the ground that what was right in argument might read wrong in reports, and consequently

the clubs and coteries (who, after all, he maintains had nothing to do with it,) might be led into wrong views. For "'Tis *One* thing in the House, *Another* in the Press. And there are *Many Cases* that may be *Fairly* Enough Agitated in a *Regular Debate* that may yet be of *Pernicious Consequence* in the *Exposure* of them to the *People.* I have Observ'd Very Ill Effects many times from the *Ordinary Written Papers of Parliament News,* by making the *Coffee Houses* And All the *Popular Clubs*. Judges of Those *Councils* and *Deliberations* which they have Nothing to do withall."*

The *Public Intelligencer* contained a sort of obituary, some account of the proceedings in parliament and in the court of claims, a list of the circuits of the judges, of sheriffs, Lent preachers, &c. The newspaper was at last in process of fledging!

Coffee-houses were fast springing up, and they at once adopted the policy of adding newspapers to their other attractions; and to this day coffee and news have always gone together—not so much at the domestic board, as at the public rooms, where people rush in and swallow a cup of one and a slice of the other. An old poem of 1663, deprecating the use of coffee, says,

> "These less than coffee's self, these coffee men,
> These sons of nothing, that can hardly make
> Their broth, for laughing how the jest doth take,
> Yet grin, and give ye for the vine's pure blood,
> A loathsome potion not yet understood—
> Syrop of soot, or essence of old shoes,
> Dasht with diurnals or the book of news."

L'Estrange continued his *Intelligencer* till the 19th of January, 1665, when an organ more closely connected with and emanating from the court was suggested; and on

* *Observator*, March 21st, 168¾. We preserve the style of printing as a specimen of that in vogue among the newspapers. The use of old English, italics, and capitals, seems to have been regulated by no rule, as in the next century, when all nouns enjoyed the distinction of a capital initial.

Saturday, November the 13th, appeared No. 1 of the *Oxford Gazette.* The panic of the plague had driven the court from London, and, itself so pure, in its flight from corruption it sought safety in its "ancient and loyal city" of Oxford. Hence then issued the first number of the new government *Gazette,* being a folio half-sheet, "printed at Oxon by Leonard Litchfield," and published twice a week "by authority." An edition in two small folio pages was reprinted in London by Thomas Newcombe, "for the use of some merchants and gentlemen who desire the same." This *Oxford Gazette* is believed to have been written by Henry Muddiman. On the return of the court to London, the *Gazette* was transferred to the capital, and on the 5th of February, 1666, came out as the *London Gazette.* The government organ was at once placed under the control of Sir Joseph Williamson, the Under-secretary of State, who "procured for himself the writing of it," although he fulfilled his office by deputy, the paper being written by Charles Perrot, A.M., of Oriel College,* for the first five years of its existence. This first of gazetteers was the second son of Edward Perrot, Esq., of North Leigh, near Oxford, and was born at Radley, Berkshire, about the year 1632. He was a travelled and accomplished gentleman, but no doubt owed his appointment to his being the author of two pamphlets in defence of the prerogative. His progress in university honours was rapid. He was entered a Commoner of Oriel in 1645, became a Bachelor of Arts in 1649, a Fellow in 1652, Master of Arts in 1653, Dean in 1659, and was licensed to study the Civil Law in 1661. He must not be confounded with the Dr. Charles Perrott, who represented the University in parliament in the year 1679, as our gazetteer was then in another place, having died on the 23d of April, 1677, and found a grave in the chancel of North Leigh Church.

And thus and then was the *London Gazette* established.

* Wood's "Athenæ Oxoniensis," and "Fasti."

Newcombe, the registered proprietor (as we should now call it) of the *Public Intelligencer*, and who had printed under the protection of Secretary Thurlow, seems to have kept in favour: and the *London Gazette*, up till July 19th, 1688, is entered in the Stationers' Register as the property of "Thomas Newcomb, of the Savoy."

Newcombe's successor was Edward Jones, a printer of eminence, who died 16th February, 1705, aged 54, and left the *Gazette* to be carried on by his widow. Of this industrious and enterprising printer (whose grave may be seen in Hampstead churchyard), Dunton says, "His soul is enriched with many virtues; but the most orient of all are his large charity, his remarkable justice in trade, and great kindness to his aged mother." *

As we may not have occasion to allude to the *Gazette* again at present, we must take leave to anticipate a little, by mentioning a curious episode which occurs in its early history. From the following entries in the Journals of the House of Commons, it would appear that there was an edition of the government organ issued in French, but whether this was a regular or only occasional publication seems doubtful, although the entries would lead us to infer that it was regular:—

"1678, *Nov. 6th.*—A complaint having been made to the House of a material mistake in that part of the translation of the *Gazette* into French which has reference to his Majesty's proclamation for removing the Papists: Ordered, that Mons. Moranville, who translated the *Gazette* into French, and Mr. Newcombe, the printer, be summoned to attend the House on to-morrow morning."

"*Nov. 7th.*—Mr. Newcombe being called in to give an account of the translation of the *Gazette* into French, informed the House that he was only concerned in the setting the press, and that he understood not the French tongue! And that Mons. Moranville *had been employed*

* Dunton's "Life and Errors."

in that affair for many years, and was the only corrector of it. Mons. Moranville being called in, acknowledged himself guilty of the mistake, but he endeavoured to excuse it, alleging it was through inadvertency. Ordered, that Mons. Moranville be committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms, and that he be searched, and his house and lodgings. And several papers written in French being found about him, Ordered, that the said papers be referred to the committee appointed to examine Mr. Colman's papers, to translate the same, and report to the House. Ordered, that it be referred to a committee, further *to examine the matter concerning the translating, printing, and publishing the French* Gazette."—*Journals of the House of Commons,* vol. ix.

"*Whitehall, Nov.* 10*th.*—A great and malicious abuse being found to have been committed by the person entrusted to translate the *Gazette* into French, in the translation of his Majesty's late proclamation, commanding all persons being Popish recusants, or so reputed, to depart from the cities of London and Westminster, and all other places within ten miles of the same: for which he is in custody, and the matter under examination in order to his just punishment, it is thought fit for the rectifying of the said abuse, that a new and true translation of his Majesty's said proclamation be given to the world *in the French* Gazette *of this day.*"—*London Gazette, Nov.* 7-11, 1678.

"*Nov.* 18*th.*—Serjeant Seis reports from the committee appointed to examine concerning the translating, printing, and publishing the *Gazette* in French, that the committee had taken the particulars thereof, and put the same into writing, which he delivered in at the clerk's table."—*Journals of the House of Commons,* vol. ix.

We have one of these French *Gazettes* before us: its title is "Gazette de Londres. Publiée avec Privilége. No. 3,150. Depuis le Lundy, 17 jusqu'au Jeudy, 20 Aoust, 1696, V.S. Chez Edouard Jones, à la Savoye, 1696."

Thus the practice of translating the *Gazette* into French lasted at least nearly twenty years.

The early numbers of the *Gazette* consist of two pages, of two columns each, principally occupied by shipping news and short foreign advices. Occasionally an advertisement is admitted, and one of the earliest was called into existence by the Great Fire:—

"Such as have settled in new habitations since the late fire, and desire for the convenience of their correspondence to publish the place of their present abode, or to give notice of goods lost or found, may repair to the corner house in Bloomsbury, or on the east side of the great square, before the house of the Right Honorable the Lord Treasurer, where there is care taken for the receipt and publication of such advertisements."—*London Gazette*, No. 95, Oct. 11 to 15, 1666.

Pepys has little to say about the newspapers, much less than we should have expected from a man so fond of novelties and gossip. He only alludes to them in two entries in his Diary:—

"This day the news book, upon Mr. Moore's showing L'Estrange Captain Ferrers's letter, did do my Lord Sandwich great right as to the late victory."—15th June, 1665.

"No news from the north at all to-day, and the news book makes the business nothing, but that they (the rebels) are all dispersed."—26th November, 1666.

CHAPTER VI.

CHARLES II.'S PERSECUTION OF THE PRESS—PIRACIES OF LICENSED PAPERS—AMENITIES OF EDITORS—THE FIRST COMMERCIAL PAPER—THE FIRST GRATUITOUS ADVERTISER—THE FIRST LITERARY PAPER—DECISION OF THE JUDGES AS TO THE LEGALITY OF NEWSPAPERS—PROCLAMATION OF CHARLES II. AGAINST NEWS—SUPPRESSION OF THE NEWSPAPERS—THE FIRST NEWSPAPER TRIAL—HENRY CARR—TRIAL OF THOMPSON, FARWELL, AND PAIN—AN EDITOR IN THE PILLORY—THE PRESS DEGENERATING—NEWS BOOKS OF PRODIGIES—REVIVAL OF "MERCURIES"—THE FIRST SPORTING PAPER—THE FIRST MEDICAL PAPER—THE LICENSING ACT RENEWED BY JAMES II.—THE PRESS UNDER WILLIAM AND MARY—THE "ORANGE INTELLIGENCER"—THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STRUGGLES WITH THE PRESS—LORD MOHUN BULLIES IT—THE ATTEMPTS TO REVIVE THE CENSORSHIP—THE LICENSERS: FRASER, COOK, HERON, NICHOLETS, AND BOHUN—FALL OF THE LICENSING SYSTEM.

THE good, easy, rollicking sovereign, who sported with Nell Gwynne and fed his swans among his subjects with his own royal hand—who was called over by a groaning country, and hailed with shouts of welcome by admiring crowds—the dashing, laughing, jesting, sporting, gaily-embroidered object of a nation's hopes, who calls upon his subjects, in his own jocose vein, either to swell his Treasury or restore his stolen dog,—how the Press must have flourished, one would have thought, under the rollicking sway of the 'Merry Monarch." Confusion! How has this man been misrepresented and misunderstood! This loud-laugher and free-jester in the Mall—this noisy talker, who joked and bore jokes, was scheming year by year of his reign to silence the voice of public opinion, as it was heard in a subdued tone, like the sound of distant thunder, through the columns of the newspapers. He would not listen to the warning and, at first, not unfriendly voice:

he would stifle it, and risk the consequences. They did not fall upon his head, it is true, but, in passing on his way, he threw as many fagots as his brother James upon the funeral pile of his family—it was the lot of the latter to drop the spark upon it.

Proclamations, acts of parliament, prosecutions, fines, and punishments—unheard-of interpretations of the law by unscrupulous judges—punishments at variance with the constitution, following upon convictions at variance with the evidence, were brought to bear against the free speech of the newspapers. But all was in vain! the open fight was partially checked, and the enemy was working at his sap. And not altogether was the field abandoned: some two or three bold spirits still held their ground, and defied the pillory and the scourge; and the history of their struggles and their fate has been written—oh, sad record!—in the volumes of the State Trials.

Whether L'Estrange's patent of the exclusive right of printing news expired when the *London Gazette* was established we cannot say, but, with all his vigilance, he had never enjoyed it unmolested. Unlicensed newspapers never ceased to appear, some copying the titles of the licensed papers. In fact, this appears to have been a common trick, and much confusion may arise by losing sight of it. In 1679, we have "Domestick Intelligence; or, News from City and Country," by B. Harris; and a "*True* Domestick Intelligence; or, News *both* from City and Country," which Mr. Harris angrily denounces as a "Popish impostor." The Popish impostor, however, escaped the fury of the court, whilst Protestant Harris, in April, 1680, repudiating any connexion with it, says that he has, "for several weighty reasons, laid down his paper of that title"—a statement which gains much significance from its dating, "King's Bench Prison, in Southwark, April 27, 1680."

Mr. Cooke, in his "History of Party," quotes a characteristic advertisement of Nathaniel Thompson, in which

the "Popish impostor" tries to turn the tables upon his less fortunate rival: "There hath lately dropped into the world an abortive birth (some fifteen days before the legitimate issue), by a factious, infamous, perjured, Anti-Christian, a senseless lying pamphlet, by the name of the 'City and Country News.' This is the first of his offspring that ever bore a name; the rest being spurious and illegitimate, like his natural issue, which he either durst not own, or would not bring to the font to receive the marks of Christianity, no more than himself. This pamphlet-trapper and press-pirate hath cruised abroad since he put up for himself to make a prize of other men's copies, to stuff his own cargo with ill-gotten profit; making his business cheating and usurpation, to defraud all men, and, by factious libels, to sow sedition amongst the people and frighten allegiance from the subjects' bosoms. Now I leave yourselves and all honest men to be judges, whether of the two be the best intelligence; he having not only stolen from all other intelligences, but likewise from mine, to make up his senseless scrawl, as particularly the relation of Mr. Carte the Jesuit, taken in St. James's, which he inserted in his, for want of matter, three days after the same was published by me in a single half-sheet; and this is the whole proceeding of this infallible newsmonger."*

In October of the same year there were two "Weekly Advertisements of Books." "That, printed by Thomas James, is published by Mr. Vile, only for the lucre of 12d. per book. This, printed by Robert Everingham, is published by several booksellers, who do more eye the service of the trade in making all books as public as may be, than the profit of insertions."

Although the *London Gazette* supplanted the *Public Intelligencer*, L'Estrange's occupation was *not* gone, for he connected himself with a commercial paper—one of the, if not *the*, earliest:—

* Cooke's "History of Party," vol. i. p. 363.

"The City Mercury; or, Advertisements Concerning Trade, with Allowance. No. 1, Nov. 4, 1675. Advertisements received at the Intelligence Offices, upon the Royal Exchange, and next door to the Pigeon Tavern, near Charing-cross. Complaints rectified on application to Mr. Roger L'Estrange, in Gifford's-buildings, Holborn."

The scheme, which has often been tried and as often failed in London (although we believe successful in Glasgow and Dublin), of circulating sheets of advertisements gratuitously, trusting for profit to the payments for insertion, occurred to the brains of a speculative publisher in 1679; and the first gratuitous newspaper was,

"Domestick Intelligence, published gratis for the promoting of Trade. Printed by N. Thompson."

The first newspaper which devoted itself to literary matters—the great grandfather of the *Literary Gazette* and *Athenæum*—was,

"Mercurius Librarius; or, a Faithful Account of all Books and Pamphlets. No. 1, April 9th to 16th, 1680."

This "Mercury" thus announces his mission: "All booksellers that approve of the design of publishing this catalogue weekly, or once in fourteen days at least, are desired to send in to one of the undertakers, any book, pamphlet, or sheet they would have in it, so soon as published, that they may be inserted in order as they come out; their books shall be delivered them back again upon demand. To show they design the public advantage of the trade, they will expect but 6d. for inserting any book, nor but 12d. for any other advertisement relating to the trade, unless it be excessive long."

The hand was now raised that was to crush with one blow the life out of the press: it was suspended over it, awaiting but an excuse to fall, and it was not difficult to find one. The early part of the year 1680 furnished three good enough for its purpose:—

"Jesuita Vapulans; or, a Whip for the Fool's Back and a Gag for his foul Mouth. No. 1, Feb. 1st, 1680."

"News from the Land of Chivalry; containing the Pleasant and Delectable History of the Wonderful and Strange Adventures of Don Rugero de Strangemento,* Knight of the Squeaking Fiddlestick, and of several other Pagan Knights and Ladies. No. 1, Feb. 21st, 1680."

"Mercurius Infernus; or, News from the other World, discovering the Cheats and Abuses of this, being all Truth, no Fable. No. 1, March 4th, 1680."

The press was licentious—of course it could not have caught the infection from the court, although it *has* been said that it spread from the court to the cottage, and could scarcely have been expected to escape the printing-office—and the judges of the land were consulted as to the best means of correcting it. The execrable Scroggs, and the brutal Jeffreys,—two names that call up associations more disgusting than any that attach to the vilest criminals it was their province to try—two names that will be detestable in the ears of Englishmen as long as the word Englishman means what it did and does,—declared that "all the judges of England having been met together, to know whether any person whatsoever may expose to the public knowledge any matter of intelligence, or any matter whatsoever that concerns the public, they gave it as their resolution that no person whatsoever could expose to the public knowledge anything that concerned the affairs of the public without license from the king, or from such persons as he thought fit to entrust with that affair."

Acting upon those opinions, the king issued a proclamation "for suppressing the printing and publishing of unlicensed news books and pamphlets of news," dated May 12th, 1680. It opens with some truisms, which, in their general application, cannot be found fault with, and closes

* Roger L'Estrange.

with a transparent effort to make the press subservient to the purposes of the court:—

"Whereas, it is of great importance to the state that all news printed and published to the people, as well concerning foreign as domestic affairs, should be agreeable to truth, or at least warranted by good intelligence, that the minds of his majesty's subjects may not be disturbed or amused by lies or vain reports, which are many times raised on purpose to scandalise the government, or for other indirect ends; and whereas of late many evil-disposed persons have made it a common practice to print and publish pamphlets of news without license or authority, and therein have vended to his majesty's people all the idle and malicious reports that they could collect or invent, contrary to law: the continuance whereof would, in a short time, endanger the peace of the kingdom, the same manifestly tending thereto, as has been declared by all his majesty's judges unanimously; his majesty, therefore, considering the great mischief that may ensue upon such licentious and illegal practices, if not timely prevented, hath thought fit, by this his proclamation (with the advice of his privy council), strictly to prohibit and forbid all persons whatsoever to print or publish any news books or pamphlets of news not licensed by his majesty's authority."

That Charles was sincere in his professions of a desire to curb the licentiousness of the press cannot for a moment be imagined. The theatre never exhibited grosser immoralities, yet the king frequented it and applauded them; the courtiers were corrupt and vicious, and the more corrupt and vicious they were the closer was his friendship with them; the poets that were the most obscene were his greatest favourites; the ladies about the court were courtezans, and he nestled in their bosoms; the judges were venal and ruffianly, and he honoured them; in fact, the times were wretchedly immoral, society was unhinged, public men unprincipled, and there was no truth in them, and the

example of the monarch had done it all. Then why this show of virtuous indignation against the press? Would it not almost lead us to believe that it alone stood up in the cause of virtue, and cried shame upon such things? At all events, it is to its credit that it and they could not agree, and that its honest voice was found inconvenient to all-dominant vice!

The proclamation failing, the king had recourse to the law. Carr was his victim, and Scroggs and Jeffreys his myrmidons. Henry Carr, who is described as "of the parish of St. Sepulchre, gentleman," was the writer of the "Weekly Packet of Advice from Rome," a paper which, we may presume, was not very friendly to the court; but whatever might have been the terms in which it had expressed its hostility, there is certainly not one word of libel or sedition in the article which formed the subject of his prosecution. It runs in this strain (we have purposely selected the part smacking most of sedition): "There is lately found out by an experienced physician, an incomparable medicament called the wonder-working plaister, truly Catholic in operation, somewhat of kin to the Jesuit's powder, but more effectual. The virtues of it are strange and various. It will make justice deaf as well as blind," &c. &c.* Scroggs, however, who had of his own *ipse dixit* made it illegal to print news, could also make a quiet piece of irony rank sedition or scandalous libel. He first tries to wheedle over the witnesses, and in examining the printer, Stevens, thus coaxes him to criminate his employer: "Now I shall have you, for I do believe you are an honest man." "Answer me that question, and thou shalt be a brave man," &c. Stevens, however, with obdurate honesty, refuses to swear to facts of which he is doubtful, or to words put into his head by Lord Chief Justice Scroggs and Mr. Recorder Jeffreys, whereon Scroggs, in disgust, kicks him out of the

* Howell's "State Trials," vol. vii. pp. 1111-30.

witness-box, in the exclamation, "What tricks we have in *this* world!" Guileless, virtuous, upright judge! Try thy power of flattery upon the jury: "I promise you this: if my life and fortune were at stake, I would be tried by this jury at the bar." Sir Francis Winnington now addresses this most intelligent jury for the prisoner. He denies, with the greatest truth, that there has been one atom of evidence to prove the authorship of the alleged libel; the audience "hum;" Scroggs and Jeffreys scowl upon them, and the chief justice exclaims to the most intelligent jury, "You see what a case we are in, gentlemen; you see what a sort of people we are got among!" and commences his summing up with a long denunciation of the "humming" sympathisers of the prisoner, shamefully threatening, in case of a conviction, to make the punishment heavier in consequence of this expression of public feeling! And, in this address to the most intelligent jury, Lord Chief Justice Sir William Scroggs lays down the following most startling law: "We (the judges) did all subscribe that to print or publish any news book or pamphlet of news whatsoever, is illegal; that it is a manifest intent to the breach of the peace, and they may be proceeded against by law for an illegal thing. And that is for a public notice to all people, and especially printers and booksellers, that they ought to print no book or pamphlet of news whatever without authority. . . . . But, if so be they will undertake to print news foolishly, they ought to be punished, AND SHALL BE PUNISHED" (we can hear him thump his desk as he shouts this threat) "if they do it without authority, though there is nothing reflecting on the government, as an unlawful thing." He is fearful that the jury may hesitate, and his prey escape him, so he warns them *not* to give the prisoner the benefit of a doubt! "Human frailty must be allowed, that is, you may be mistaken. For you do not swear, nor are you bound to swear here, that he was the publisher of the book; but, if you find him guilty, you only swear you believe it so."

Of course the most intelligent jury return a verdict of "Guilty," though not without an hour's consideration.

"You have done like honest men!" cries Scroggs, triumphantly.

"They have done like honest men!" echoes Jeffreys, with the exultation which a boa-constrictor might display on seeing a rabbit about to be given up to him to mangle.

And thus was a trial carried on at the Guildhall, London, in the year of grace sixteen hundred and eighty!

What was Carr's sentence is not recorded, but Anthony à Wood gives us a glance of him as he is going out of the world: "After King James II. came to the crown, Cave" ("a certain scribbler called Henry Cave," as Anthony has it) "was drawn over so far by the Roman Catholic party, for bread and money sake, and nothing else, to write on their behalf, and to vindicate their proceedings against the Church of England in his 'Mercuries,' which weekly came out, entitled, 'Public Occurrences Truly Stated.' The first of which came out 21st February, 1687, and were by him continued to the time of his death, which happened 8th August, 1688, aged 42. He was buried in the yard belonging to the Blackfriars Church, in London." Thus did persecution turn an honest gentleman into a mercenary scribe.

Two years later another government prosecution was set on foot against a newspaper—the "Loyal Protestant and True Domestic Intelligence; or, News both from City and Country," of March 7th, 1682; and Nathaniel Thompson, the printer, and William Pain and John Farwell, the authors, were tried at Guildhall, before Lord Chief Justice Sir F. Pemberton,* for asserting in that paper that Sir Edmondbury Godfrey destroyed himself, and was *not* murdered, and for insinuating the corruption of justice; in fact, for throwing a doubt and ridicule upon the sham plots that were then being got up. The defendants were not heroes

* State Trials, vol. viii. pp. 1359-98.

—they cried "*Peccavimus*," and tried to criminate each other, but the jury found them all guilty. Thompson and Farwell were each sentenced, by Justice Jones, to pay a fine of 100*l.*, and be imprisoned until they paid it, and to stand in the pillory in Palace-yard the last day of term (Farwell being an attorney in Covent Garden) for one hour. Pain got off easier, having to pay the fine only; but the other two stood in the pillory pursuant to their sentence, on Wednesday, July 5th, 1682, with the following inscription over their heads: "For libelling the justice of the nation, by making the world believe that Sir Edmondbury Godfrey murdered himself."

In the course of this trial, Pemberton takes occasion to endorse the opinions of the other judges as to the legality of publishing news, and in fact denies the right of any one to discuss public matters in print! "The people (Godfrey's alleged murderers) had suffered as malefactors, and what had he (Farwell) to do with it? If they had suffered innocently, he ought to have done no such thing as this is!" To hang an inconsiderable fellow or two in mistake, says this excellent judge, in effect, is excusable; but for a rascally lawyer to dare to protest in print against such a thing, is—is—— There is no language strong enough to express his indignation; to the pillory with the scoundrel!

Roger North tells how Justice Jones put down the "Weekly Packet of Advice from Rome," issuing the order, "*Liber intitulatus* 'The Weekly Pacquet of Advice from Rome' *non ulterius imprimatur*." This dictatorial sentence he issued on the assumption that "all jurisdiction which the Star Chamber might lawfully exercise rested by law in the Court of King's Bench!"—*Examen*, pp. 564-6.

In addition to fines and penalties, the Court attempted to suppress the hostile press by the aid of ridicule, and replied in such papers as "Heraclitus Ridens; or, a Discourse between Jest and Earnest, where many a True

Worde is pleasantlie spoken in Opposition to Libellers against the Government," which was commenced in February, 1681, and continued till August 22d, 1682.*

The titles now begin to remind us of the time of the civil wars, and even of the infancy of the Newspaper Press. The persecutions of the judges had at length nearly silenced the better sort of papers, and the subject of the plots was handled by a reckless lot, who defied licensers, argument, and decency. It was clear that the press was going back. The people still craved for news; for Scroggs, on the trial of Henry Carr, says: "So fond are men in these days, that when they will deny their children a penny for bread, they will lay it out for a pamphlet. And it did so swarm, and the temptations were so great, that no man could keep twopence in his pocket because of the news." Seventy new journals were started between the years 1661 and 1668, and they were going on increasing, when the king and the judges flung themselves upon them and extinguished them. The smouldering embers still flickered in news books of wonders and prodigies, that easily procured a license; and the public mind was fed, "by order," with such indigestible stuff as ghosts, mermaids, witches, and devils. The people might have their fill of these, but not a taste of the forbidden fruit of politics. Accordingly there came out for their edification and improvement, stamped with the sanction of the king's licensers, the following delectable news:—

"News from Puddle Dock; or a narrative of Apparitions and Transactions in the house of Mr. E. Pitts, at Puddle Dock," 4to, 1674.

"News from Kensington, being a relation how a Maid there is supposed to have been carried away by an Evil Spirit," 4to, 1674.

"Strange and terrible News from Shoreditch, of a

* In 1712 it was thought worthy of a republication in two volumes.

woman that hath sold herself to the Devil, living in Badger-alley," 4to, 1674.

"News from St. John's-street, of a Monster brought forth of a Sow," 4to, 1676.*

"Strange and Wonderful News from Bridewell of a Converted Whore," 4to, 1677.

"Strange News from the Deep, with an account of a large, prodigious Whale, with a woodcut," 4to, 1677.

"News from Buckinghamshire; or, a Perfect Relation how a young Maid hath been for twelve years possessed with the Devil," 4to, 1677.

"News from Wicklow; a Relation how Dr. Moore was taken invisibly by his Friends," 4to, 1678.

"News from Pannier-alley; or, a True Relation of some Pranks the Devil hath lately played with a Plaster-pot there," 4to, 1687.

"Strange News from Arpington, near Bexley, in Kent; a True Relation of a Young Maid who was possessed with several Devils or Evil Spirits," 4to, 1680.

Such was the food which it seemed good to King Charles and his advisers to administer to the minds of his loving subjects; and such were the papers that came forth recommended to their notice by the licensers' "Imprimatur."

The few respectable papers remaining copied their news from the *Gazette,* or gave none at all:—

"The last *Gazette* tells us nothing from Edinburgh, so that you will not wonder that we have nothing from thence."—*Mercurius Domesticus, December* 19, 1679.

The writers who ventured upon controversy were the old lot who had written during the civil wars—the same scurrilous libellous crew, adopting in most cases the same old titles of "Mercuries":—

"The Weekly Discovery," 1681, answered by

"The Weekly Discoverer Stript Naked; or, Jest and

* A copy sold at Mr. Bindley's sale for 3*l.* 7*s.*—Timperley's "Dictionary of Printers."

Earnest exposed to view in his proper colours," Feb. 16th, 1681.

"Mercurius Bifrons; or, the English Janus: the one side true and serious, the other jocular." No. 1, Feb. 17th, 1681.

"The Mock Press." No. 1, 1681.

"The Conventicle Courant, setting forth the daily troubles, dangers, and abuses that loyal gentlemen meet with by putting the laws in execution against unlawful and seditious Meetings." No. 1, July 14th, 1682; answered by

"The English Gusman; or, Captain Hilton's* Memoirs, the Grand Informer." No. 1, Jan. 27th, 1682-3.

"Democritus Ridens; or, Comus and Momus, a new jest-and-earnest prattling concerning the Times," 1681.

"The Weekly Visions of the Popish Plot," 1681.

"Visions of the Pope," 1681.

"Scotch Memoirs, by way of Dialogue between John and Elymas." No. 1, February, 1683.

The government had, at last, put down the newspapers and subjected all intelligence to a bi-weekly filtration through the dry columns of the *London Gazette*. Now will our readers be prepared to hear that there was no act of parliament, no special law to warrant this suppression—will they believe that there still existed in England so much ignorance and so much apathy, that the king and the judges could cajole the people into the belief that the *common law* prohibited the publication of news? The Licensing Act, which had given the king the power of restraining the press, had expired in 1679, and there was no renewal of it in this reign—it was more convenient to make the people believe that the sovereign had the power constitutionally, which he now exercised so vigorously, of stopping the press.

* Captain John Hilton was the author of the "Conventicle Courant."

Of course, adventurous spirits there were—earnest thinkers and vigorous writers, who raised their voices now and then, and it was not always that they were immediately silenced. The *Protestant Intelligence,* the *Current Intelligence,* the *Domestic Intelligence,* the *True Newes,* the *London Mercury,* dot the dreary waste that extends over the four or five years which followed the king's proclamation, but public feeling was cold, and they were suffered to languish and die; they had been but poor feeble things at first. The "Monthly Recorder of all True Occurrences both Foreign and Domestic" (No. 1, from December 1, 1681, to January 1, 1682) says that the "Weekly Gazettes, Intelligencies, Mercuries, Currantoes, and news books" which then existed, were patched up in haste "to make their news sell."

Of this barren period it remains only to be said that it produced the first sporting and the first medical paper—the *Bell's Life* and the *Lancet* of the seventeenth century. The title of the first is not so comprehensive as the successor to which we have compared it: "The Jockey's Intelligencer; or, Weekly Advertisement of Horses and Second-hand Coaches to be Bought or Sold," June 28, 1683; the other was entitled, "Observations on the Weekly Bill from July 27 to August 3, with Directions how to avoid the Diseases now Prevalent. Licensed by Robert Midgley," 1686.

Mr. Nichols has stated (and it has been accepted as an undisputed fact) that the Licensing Act, which expired in 1679, was not renewed until the fourth of William and Mary (1692). Mr. Knight Hunt has, however, found a statement in Fox's "History of James the Second," that that monarch, on the news reaching him that the Duke of Monmouth had landed, asked of the Parliament and obtained, in 1685, a revival of the 13th and 14th Charles II. That it was merely a temporary provision to meet a temporary danger appears to us most probable, from no mention

of it being made by other writers; but Fox accounts for their silence in another way: "This circumstance, important as it is, does not seem to have excited much attention at the time, which, considering the general principles then in fashion, is not surprising. That it should have been scarcely noticed by any writer is more wonderful. It is time, however, that the terror inspired by the late prosecutions for libels, and violent conduct of the courts upon such occasions, rendered a formal destruction of the liberty of the press a matter of less importance, so little does the magistracy, when thus inclined to act tyrannically, stand in need of tyrannical laws to effect its purpose."

But the doom of the Stuarts was hastening on; the feeble hands of James let go the chains in which he had attempted to hold his people, and the people's press once more was free. It was of little consequence, *now*, that James's Licensing Act was to last for seven years: the government now dared not coerce the press, but wisely appealed to it, and through it to the mind of the nation, for a guidance in forming the new order of things. A new system had been set up—a rotten one had just tumbled to pieces—and it was the pleasure and the policy of William III. that his people should be in some measure consulted in its formation. The Parliament and the Press were the two mediums through which he could reach them collectively, and he listened to both. The new government started the *Orange Intelligencer* and the *Orange Gazette*. And its opponents were not restrained from replying in newspapers of their own, but there was less acrimony of feeling displayed—the press had ceased to be *savage*.

But the prerogative which the king waived, the Parliament now pretended to—the legislature assumed the power which the executive had found untenable—the Commons saw with dread the rising strength of what was one day to be its rival, and tried to throw it. On the 21st of December, 1694, a complaint was made that one Dyer, a publisher of

news-letters, had ventured to print the proceedings of the House, which thereupon, in great wrath, ordered him to be summoned by the serjeant-at-arms to attend at the bar. He was induced to acknowledge his "offence," and ordered to kneel down and receive the reprimand of the Speaker "for his great presumption." Having thus brought their rising rival on its knees to their bar, these liberal gentlemen proceeded to vote "that no news-letter writers do, in their letters or other papers that they disperse, presume to intermeddle with the debates or any other proceedings of this House."

A worthy member was Lord Mohun! The House itself only reprimanded the contumacious printer, his lordship cudgelled him. "One Dyer," says Kennet, "was justly reprimanded by the Speaker for presuming to represent the proceedings of the House. But such a gentle rebuke could not reform a fellow, who wrote for two very necessitous causes—for the Jacobite party and for bread. But the Lord Mohun rebuked him more effectually some time after; for, finding him at one of his factious coffee-houses, and showing him a letter wherein his lordship was named, Dyer owned it, not knowing my lord, who immediately laid on him with a cudgel he had provided for that purpose, and made him swear to have no more to say of the Lord Mohun."

Such being the temper of the Parliament, no wonder that the Licensing Act, on its falling in in 1692, was revived for another year; but it was its last gasp, and the licensing and censorship of papers was for ever abandoned. The Lords made an attempt to throw round the press the shackles in which the Commons could no longer hold it, and passed a Licensing Act, which was, however, rejected by the Lower House on the 17th of April, 1695.

Another pretext was seized for reviving the censorship, but with the same success. The *Flying Post*, in alluding to the Parliament schemes for retrieving the public credit in 1697, made the following not very treasonable remark:

"We hear that when the Exchequer notes are given out upon the capitation fund, whosoever shall desire specie on them, will have it at 5½ per cent. of the society of gentlemen that have subscribed to advance some hundred thousands of pounds." This paragraph the House voted to be a malicious insinuation designed to destroy the credit and currency of the Exchequer-bills, and ordered the printer, John Salisbury, into custody; and Mr. Pulteney and Mr. Moore, with more zeal than discretion, seized the opportunity and obtained leave to bring in a bill prohibiting the printing of unlicensed news. This bill passed through a first reading safely, but its second reading was negatived on the 3d of April, 1697; and thus ignobly perished the late attempt to enslave the press. Its death and burial are related with concise significance: "Mr. Pulteney, according to order, presented to the House a bill for preventing the writing, printing, and publishing any news without license, and the same was received and read the first time. And a motion being made, and the question being put that the bill be read a second time, it passed in the negative."—*Journal of the House of Commons*, xi. 767.

Of the licensers of these latter times we hear nothing unfavourable; it was the system, not the men, that was to be condemned. Dunton, in his "Life and Errors," speaks well of most of them. Of Fraser, who was licenser of newspapers in 1689, he says: "He was our chief licenser for several years, and it was pity he had not continued longer in the same post, for his treatment was kind and impartial." Edward Cook, who succeeded Fraser, is described by Dunton as a "good lawyer," and "no bigot." And Heron, who only held the office for four months, and Nicholets, are both spoken of in favourable terms; whilst the worst he says of Edward Bohun (himself a voluminous political and miscellaneous writer, and who lost his place from not being sufficiently vigilant) is, that he was "furious against Dissenters." (Vol. i. pp. 265 to 269.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEWS-LETTERS—THE "ATHENIAN MERCURY"—THE FIRST LADIES' PAPER—A FEW MORE ECCENTRIC PAPERS—CHARGE FOR ADVERTISEMENTS—SPECIMENS OF ADVERTISEMENTS—HALFPENNY AND FARTHING POSTS—FIRST PROPOSAL OF A STAMP DUTY—THE PRINTERS' REMONSTRANCE—PERSECUTION OF DYER—ATTEMPTS TO COERCE THE PRESS—PROCLAMATION OF QUEEN ANNE—THE "OBSERVATOR"—TRIAL OF JOHN TUTCHIN—EDITOR'S WAGES—CHARACTER OF TUTCHIN—THE FIRST DAILY PAPER—THE "DAILY COURANT"—PROSPECTUS—SKETCH OF BUCKLEY—STYLE OF NEWS REPORTS—THE LEADING PAPERS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS—GROUP OF EDITORS—WRITTEN SUPPLEMENTS—IMPROVEMENT IN NEWSPAPER WRITING—ADDISON, STEELE, DE FOE, SWIFT, AND PRIOR "ON THE PRESS"—THE "TATLER," "EXAMINER," "WHIG EXAMINER," ETC.—SWIFT IN A FRENZY—PROSECUTION OF RIDPATH, ETC.—THE FIRST STAMP ACT PASSED—ITS EFFECTS.

THE unfettered press now sent forth its scores of weekly papers. From the accession of William and Mary to 1692, a space of four years, twenty-six papers had sprung into existence, and they now went on increasing, and one of them ventured to make the word "Reform" its watch-word—*Mercurius Reformatus,* by Dr. J. Wellwood.* In 1695 the press produced another novelty, the half-printed, half-written news-letter. The first of this class was the *Flying Post,* which had incurred the wrath of the House of Commons, and which thus announces its design: "If any gentleman has a mind to oblige his country friend or correspondent with this account of public affairs, he may have it for twopence, of J. Salisbury, at the Rising Sun, in Cornhill, on a sheet of fine paper, half of which being blank, he may thereon write his own private business, or

* This, or a paper of the same name, was, about this time, edited by Bishop Burnet.

the material news of the day." The necessity of writing "the material news of the day," does not speak much for the reporting or intelligence department of the *Flying Post*. The next year witnessed an improvement upon the news-letter, and on the 4th of August, 1696, Ichabod Dawks brought out *his* news-letter, printed in type in imitation of writing, and introduced with the following address:—

"This letter will be done upon good writing-paper, and blank space left that any gentleman may write his own private business. It does undoubtedly exceed the best of the written news, contains double the quantity, with abundance more ease and pleasure, and will be useful to improve the younger sort in writing a curious hand."

These news-letters were in existence in 1712, when a Mr. Dyer, according to the *Spectator*, also brought out one; besides the "New State of Europe; or, True Account of Public Transactions and Learning," with two blank pages for correspondence.

A publication somewhat in the style of *Notes and Queries* was started on the 17th of March, 1689-90, by John Dunton, Richard South, and Dr. Norris (who were afterwards joined by Wesley), under the title of the *Athenian Gazette*, which, on a suggestion from "authority," was altered to the *Athenian Mercury*. It was soon imitated by the *Lacedemonian Mercury*, carried on by Mr. Brown and Mr. Pate, and it had sufficient merit to exist for six years, and gained some fame. Sir William Temple sought and gave information in its pages; and, says Dunton, "Mr. Swift, a country gentleman" (who was then with Temple), "sent an ode." It was attacked by Settle in his "New Athenian Comedy," but it went on answering queries, now the most abstruse, now the simplest, in a quiet, grave, oracular way, giving here and there a scrap of intelligence, till February 8th, 1695-6, when it was suspended for the following remarkable reasons: "As the coffee-houses have the votes every day, and nine news-

papers every week," Dunton thinks it better to publish his *Mercury* in quarterly volumes, "designing to continue it again as a weekly paper *as soon as the glut of news is a little over*." A selection from this *Mercury* was afterwards reprinted under the title of the "Athenian Oracle."

Literary papers were on the increase, and we find two started in 1691:—

"Mercurius Eruditorum; or, News from the Learned World." No. 1, August 8.

"The History of Learning; or, an Abstract of several Books lately published as well Abroad as at Home."

One newspaper devoted itself to the ladies:—

"The Ladies' Mercury." No. 1, February 18, 1692.

Then we have a French and English paper:—

"The London Mercury; or, Mercure de Londres, printed in opposite columns, English and French." No. 1, June 3, 1696.

And a few more eccentric ones, such as:—

"A Ramble Round the World, &c., by Kainophilus, a Lover of Novelties, performed by a single Sheet coming out every Friday; to each being added the Irish Courant." No. 1, November 6, 1689.

"The Night Walker; or, Evening Rambler," &c. To be published monthy. No. 1, September, 1696.

The "Collection for Improvement of Husbandry and Trade" (1682) deserves a passing word of praise. It was conducted with great industry and care by John Houghton, F.R.S., an apothecary, and dealer in tea, coffee, and chocolate, in Bartholomew-lane, and carried on till September 24, 1703. A selection from it, in four octavo volumes, was published by Richard Bradley, F.R.S., in 1727-8.

With the advance in numbers and influence of the newspapers, the advertising system became more fully developed. The charge for advertisements in the papers seems to have been about one shilling for eight lines. The

Jockey's Intelligencer, in 1683, announces its terms as "one shilling for a horse or coach for notification, and sixpence for renewing;" the *Observator Reformed* charged "one shilling for an advertisement of eight lines;" and the *County Gentleman's Courant*, two years later, thus announces an advance: "Seeing promotion of trade is a matter which ought to be encouraged, the price of advertisements is advanced to twopence per line." Though in what way this rise could encourage the promotion of trade we confess ourselves unequal to comprehend.

The advertisements themselves are, in many of their forms, truly newspaper curiosities. The editor of one paper, the *Collection for the Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, himself appealed to the public on the advertiser's behalf, and was a sort of agent for him, thus:—

"If any Hamburg or other merchant, who shall deserve two hundred pounds with an apprentice, wants one, I can help."

"I want a cook-maid for a merchant."

"I want an apprentice for an eminent tallow-chandler."

"I know of several men and women whose friends would gladly have them match'd, which I'll endeavour to do, as from time to time I shall hear of such whose circumstances are likely to agree; and I'll assure such as will come to me it shall be done with all the honour and secrecy imaginable. Their own parents shall not manage it more to their satisfaction, and the more comes to me the better I shall be able to serve 'em."

"A fair house in Eastcheap, next to the Flower-de-lis, now in the tenure of a smith, with a fair yard laid with freestone, and a vault underneath, with a cellar under the shop, done with the same stone, is to be sold. I have the disposal of it."

"If any have a place, belonging to the law or otherwise, that is worth £1,000 to £2,000, I can help to a customer."

"If any will sell a free estate within thirty miles of

London, with or without a house, to the value of £100 a year, or thereabouts, I can help to a customer."

"If any divine or their relicts have complete sets of manuscripts, sermons upon the Epistles and Gospels, the Catechisms or Festivals, I can help to a customer."

In other instances, the editor testified to the respectability of his advertiser:—

"Mr. David Rose, chirurgeon and man-midwife, lives at the first brick house on the right in Gun-yard, Hounds-ditch, near Aldgate, London. I have known him these twenty years."

"If any want all kind of necessaries for corps or funerals, I can help to one who does assure me he will use them kindly; and whoever can keep their corps till they get to London, and have a coffin set down, may have them afterwards kept any reasonable time."

"I have met with a curious gardener, that will furnish anybody that sends to me for fruit-trees, and floreal shrubs, and garden seeds. I have made him promise, with all solemnity, that whatever he sends me shall be purely good, and I verily believe he may be depended on."

"One that has waited upon a lady divers years, and understands all affairs in housekeeping and the needle, desires some such place. She seems a discreet, staid body."

"If any justice of peace wants a clerk, I can help to one that has been so seven years; understands accounts, to be a butler, also to receive money. He also can shave and buckle wiggs."

"If I can meet with a sober man that has a counter-tenor voice, I can help him to a place worth thirty pound the year or more."

"If any noble or other gentleman want a porter that is very lusty, comely, and six foot high and two inches, I can help."

"If any want a wet nurse, I can help them, as I am inform'd to a very good one."

"I want a complete young man that will wear a livery, to wait on a very valuable gentleman; but he must know how to play on a violin or flute."

"I want a genteel footman, that can play on the violin, to wait on a person of honour."

The following are fair samples of the ordinary style of advertisements at this time:—

"About forty miles from London is a schoolmaster has had such success with boys as there are almost forty ministers and schoolmasters that were his scholars. His wife also teaches girls lace-making, plain work, raising paste, sauces, and cookery to a degree of exactness. His price is 10*l.* to 11*l.* the year, with a pair of sheets and one spoon, to be returned if desired; coaches and other conveniences pass every day within half a mile of the house, and 'tis but an easy day's journey to or from London."

"One has a pert boy, about ten years old; can write, read, and be very well recommended. She is willing he should serve some lady or gentleman."*

"Lost a flower'd silk Manto Gown, of a sable and gold Colour, lin'd with black, between Arniscid Clere (St. Agnes le Clair) and the White Houses at Hogsden (Hoxton), on Wednesday last, the 19th instant, about 4 or 5 o'Clock in the Afternoon. Any one that can give intelligence of the said Manto Gown to Mr. Blewitt's at the Rose and Crown in Loathberry, shall have 10*s.* for their pains."—*True Protestant Mercury*, No. 162 (1682).

"One that is fit to keep a warehouse, be a steward, or do anything that can be supposed an intelligent man that has been a shopkeeper is fit for, and can give any security that can be desired as far as ten thousand pounds goes, and has some estate of his own, desires an employment of one hundred pounds a year or upwards. I can give an account of him."—*A Collection for Improvement of Husbandry and Trade.* January 26th, 1693-4.

* Timperley's "Dictionary of Printers and Printing."

"A very eminent brewer, and one I know to be a very honest gentleman, wants an apprentice. I can give an account of him."—*A Collection for Improvement of Husbandry and Trade.* February 2d.

"Many masters want apprentices, and many youths want masters. If they apply themselves to me, I'll strive to help them. Also for variety of valuable services."—*Ibid.* March 16th.

"If any young man that plays well on a violin, and writes a good hand, desires a clerkship, I can help him to twenty pounds a year."—*Ibid.* March 16th.

"A grocer of good business desires an apprentice of good growth."—*Ibid.* April 6th.

From the title, we are almost disposed to assign to this period the birth of the newspaper comic—the first *Punch*—but we have not seen the original, so do not speak with certainty:—

The Merry Mercury; or, a Farce of Fools, No. 1, Nov. 29th, 1700.

The demand for news continued on the increase, and was freely supplied. The "*British Mercury*, published by the Company of the Sun Fire-office in Threadneedle-street" (No. 369, July 30th to August 2d, 1712), gives a short sketch of the progress of journalism up to its own time, and speaks of the close of the seventeenth and commencement of the eighteenth century thus:—

"Some time before the Revolution, the press was again set to work, and such a furious itch of novelty has ever since been the epidemical distemper, that it has proved fatal to many families, the meanest of shopkeepers and handicrafts spending whole days in coffee-houses to hear news and talk politicks, whilst their wives and children wanted bread at home; and their business being neglected, they were themselves thrust into gaols, or forced to take sanctuary in the army. Hence sprung that inundation of Postmen, Postboys, Evening Posts, Supplements, Daily

Courants, and Protestant Postboys, amounting to twenty-one every week, besides many more, which have not survived to this term; and besides the *Gazette*, which has the sanction of public authority, and this Mercury, only intended for and delivered to those persons whose goods or houses are insured by the Sun Fire-office."

Notwithstanding the doleful strain in which these gentlemen look back to the deplorable fact that newspapers increased as education spread and liberty advanced—notwithstanding the ruin, starvation, army, and gaols which they brought men to, and the fatal and epidemical distempers to which they are likened, "the Company of Insurers" seem to have had no compunction in adding to their number, in 1708, their own *British Mercury*, which, without a word of apology for its own existence, recounts these horrors.

The first number of this paper contains the following prospectus, relating more to the new system of insurance than the principles or purpose of the new journal:—

"*The British Mercury.* Printed for the *Company of the* Sun Fire Office *in* Threadneedle Street, *behind the* Royal Exchange, London, *where Policies in due Form are deliver'd out for Insuring Houses, Movable Goods, Furniture, and Wares from Loss and Damage by Fire in any Part of* Great Britain, *to the Value of* £500 *each Policy to any Person who shall take them, paying the Stamp Duty and the first Quarter; namely, Two Shillings if they desire no* British Mercury, *or Two Shillings and Sixpence if they will have it.* ☞ *Either of which Quarteridges they are to pay within* fifteen Days *after every Quarter Day of the Year. The Rest of the Conditions of the Insurance are contain'd in the Company's Proposals, printed the 4th of* July *last, which are to be had gratis at their said Office. Numb.* 398 Wednesday, *February* 18, 17$\frac{13}{13}$."

Halfpenny posts and farthing posts also sprang up towards the close of the seventeenth century; mere recitals

of news, but rarely meddling with politics, containing on the average from twelve to fifteen advertisements, and sold in the streets by hawkers. It was now for the first time that it struck the legislature that what it could not suppress, it could, at all events, *tax*, and by putting a stamp of one penny upon every newspaper containing a whole sheet, and of one halfpenny on every half-sheet, raise a not inconsiderable revenue. A project to this effect was brought forward in the House of Commons in 1701, but abandoned; it has, however, furnished us with some curious notices and statistics of the halfpenny newspapers, contained in a pamphlet which it elicited, and which is preserved in the British Museum, entitled, "Reasons humbly offered to the Parliament on behalf of several persons concerned in the paper-making, printing, and publishing of the halfpenny newspapers." This document commences by stating, that there are in London five master printers engaged in this trade, who use a quantity of paper estimated "by a modest computation at twenty thousand reams per year." . . . . "Each of these five printers pays nine shillings per week duty to his majesty, over and beside a shilling for every advertisement therein inserted, so that, by a like computation, each printer of the halfpenny newspapers pays, *communibus annis*, to the king the sum of about 60*l.* a year, besides what the paper-maker pays." The next argument against the duty reminds us of the notable advertisement of Ichabod Dawks, quoted at page 87: "For that the said newspapers have been always a whole sheet and a half, and sold for one halfpenny to the poorer sort of people, who are purchasers of it, by reason of its cheapness, to divert themselves, and also *to allure herewith their young children and entice them to reading*, and should a duty of three halfpence be laid upon these *mean newspapers* (which, *by reason of the coarseness of the paper, the generality of gentlemen are above conversing with*), it would utterly extinguish and suppress the

same." Hundreds of families, the memorial goes on, get their living by selling them, and among them "many blind creatures, of whom divers of them who are industrious, and have but a penny or three halfpence for a stock to begin with in a morning, will, before night, advance it to eighteenpence or two shillings, which greatly tends to the comfort and support of such poor and blind creatures who sell them about the streets."

The state of the cheap press before the imposition of a stamp seems to have been much the same (making allowance for the general progress) as it has become on its repeal. The modest admission of the printers, touching the coarseness of the paper, affords an amusing contrast to the opinion held of themselves by some of our present successors to these halfpenny posts, who declare themselves, in all their flimsiness, fit for the palace and the drawing-room.

There appears to have been no government prosecution of a newspaper in the reign of William—another indication of the Dutchman's clearheadedness and wise policy, for there must have been plenty of provocation given by the Tory papers—but the powers, male and female, who ruled poor, weak, hesitating Anne, again shook an impotent fist at the stalwart figure of public opinion. On the very day that an enlightened Parliament ordered De Foe's "Shortest Way with the Dissenters" to be burned by the common hangman (the 28th February, 1702), Dyer, the news printer, was, a second time, peremptorily ordered to attend at the bar of the House, to answer for his presumption in "misrepresenting its proceedings" on the Act for Enlarging the Term allowed for taking the Oath of Abjuration. And, next day, Dyer not attending, "ordered that the attorney-general find out and prosecute him."* On the 26th March, 1702-3, the queen was induced to sign a proclamation against "printing and spreading false news," which does

* Journals of the House of Commons, vol. xiv.

little more than point back at the defunct licensing system of her uncle, with a sort of half-implied, meaningless, and ridiculous threat; but, in 1704, a more vigorous charge was made, and John Tutchin, the editor of the *Observator*, put upon his trial. The *Observator* had been the last newspaper enterprise of L'Estrange, who started it in 1679, and retired from it in 1687, on the plea that he could no longer agree with the toleration proposed by his majesty, though in all other respects he had gone the utmost lengths;* and at the period of its prosecution is described by Dunton as "the best to towel the Jacks" (the Admiralty and the Victualling Office).

For some observations which he had made on the mismanagement of some of the public business, Tutchin was called to account by the House of Commons, and treated that magnificent body with contempt. The House voted "that the *Observator*, from the 8th to the 11th of December, 1703, contains matters scandalous and malicious, reflecting on the proceedings of the House, tending to the promotion of sedition in the kingdom; and that Tutchin, the author, How, the printer, and Bragg, the publisher of that paper, should be taken into custody by the serjeant-at-arms." Tutchin kept out of the way, and went on writing, till an attack upon Sir John Packington's speech in the House appearing in the *Observator*, an address to the queen was moved and carried, praying that a proclamation might be issued for the apprehension of the author, printer, and publisher, and offering a reward for the discovery of their hiding-place.† The search seems to have been but

* Mr. Nichols says of L'Estrange's editorship of this paper: "He infused into his newspaper more information, more entertainment, and more advertisements of importance than any succeeding paper whatever, previous to the golden age of letters, in the reign of Queen Anne."

† *Dec* 15, 1703.—A committee of the House appointed to find out the author and printer of the *Observator*.—*Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. xiv. pp. 248—269.

languidly conducted, and it was not until the 4th November, 1704, that Tutchin was tried at the Guildhall, London; before Lord Chief Justice Holt, on a government prosecution for libel. The information charges him with being "a seditious person, and a daily inventor and publisher of false news, and horrible and false lies and seditious libels," and more especially with the authorship of four of these in the *Observator* of the 30th May and 11th July, 1702; 10th July, 1703; and 20th May, 1704. Although no government would now prosecute, or jury convict the writer of such articles, it must be confessed that, read by the light which flickered in those days, they were more deserving of condemnation than many which had exalted their authors in the pillory; especially the first one, which charged the ministry with being in the pay of the French king. Tutchin, too, had received a caution, both from the House of Commons and the secretary of state, and the government displayed neither impatience nor vindictiveness in the case.* The judge summed up very fairly, and the jury found the prisoner guilty of composing and publishing, but not of writing the libels. His counsel here made a motion in arrest of judgment, on the plea of an error in the indictment, and the court gave leave for a new trial;† but of this the Crown never took advantage, and Tutchin was for the future left alone. The evidence of How, the printer, who was examined as witness for the prosecution, displays a curious feature in the relative position of editor and printer:—

Witness.—It was agreed at first he was to write once a week, and I was to give him half a guinea for it.

Prisoner's Counsel.—Do you take it on you to alter (the MS.)?

* *Jan.* 3, 1703-4.—Tutchin, Bragg, and How, ordered in custody of the serjeant-at-arms.—*Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. xiv. 270.

Feb. 14, 1703-4.—The House adopts a petition, praying the queen to offer a reward for Tutchin and others.—*Ibid.* p. 336.

† Howell's "State Trials," vol. xiv. pp. 1059—1199.

Witness.—To strike out a line; never to alter the sense.

Counsel.—Do you not insert anything?

Witness.—Yes, frequently a word.

Counsel.—Do you not take upon yourself to insert several words, and leave out several?

Witness.—Yes.

Twenty-six guineas a-year, then, was the salary of the "author" of a first-class newspaper in 1704! For the *Observator was* a first-class newspaper of the day, and had the honour of being blackguarded by Swift, whilst its writer is described by Dunton as "the loyal and ingenious Tutchin, the bold assertor of English liberties, the scourge of the Highfliers, the seaman's advocate, the detector of the Victualling Office, the scorn and terror of fools and knaves, the nation's Argus, and the queen's faithful subject. He writes," adds Dunton, "with the air of a gentleman and sincerity of a Christian."*

The subject of this exaggerated eulogium had been one of the victims of Jeffreys, which entitles him to some respect. In his native county of Hampshire he had been suspected of a leaning to the Duke of Monmouth, and was arrested, gave a false name, was tried, and acquitted. Before receiving his discharge, his real name was mentioned to Jeffreys, who had him brought into court, and, without trial, sentenced him, for assuming a fictitious name, to remain in prison for seven years, to be whipped once a year through every town in Dorsetshire, to pay a fine of one hundred marks, and find security for his good behaviour during life. This extraordinary sentence was on the point of being carried into execution, when Tutchin's friends, by dint of petitions to the king, bribes to the courtiers, and presents to the judge, got him "popt into a pardon amongst others." His connexion with the press, however, was doomed to cost him his life; he was waylaid one night, and so severely beaten that he died

* Dunton's "Life and Errors," vol. i. p. 356.

shortly afterwards. His paper must have been succeeded by another of the same title, for, in 1709, one Darby was tried "for printing the *Observator*, No. 74."

The curiosity of the public now demanded greater exertions from the news printers, and "E. Mallet, against the Ditch at Fleet Bridge," organized and brought out on the 11th of March, 1702, the first daily paper.* The *Daily Courant* (for such was the title of the first morning newspaper) is printed on one side only, thus consisting of but one page of two columns, and contains five paragraphs translated from the *Haarlem Courant*, three from the *Paris Gazette*, one from the *Amsterdam Courant*, and the following modest prospectus :—

"It will be found from the foreign prints which from time to time, as occasion offers, will be mentioned in this paper, that the author has taken care to be duly furnished with all that comes from abroad in any language. And for an assurance that he will not, under any pretence of having private intelligence, impose any additions of feigned circumstances to an action, but give his extracts fairly and impartially, at the beginning of each article he will quote the foreign paper from whence it is taken, that the public, seeing from what country a piece of news comes, with the allowance of that government, may be better able to judge of the credibility and fairness of the relation. Nor will he take upon himself to give any comments or conjectures of his own, but will relate only matter-of-facts, supposing other people to have sense enough to make reflections for themselves. The *Courant* (as the title shows) will be published daily, being designed to give all the material news as soon as

* Mr. Knight Hunt ("Fourth Estate," vol. i. p. 175) dates the birth of the daily press as 1709. He might, however, have seen the *Daily Courants* of seven years previous in the British Museum. We make these corrections in no spirit of hypercriticism, but there has been so little research into the subject, that it is still possible to get the foundation right before we carry it up higher. We have already seen, in the case of the *English Mercurie*, how errors get adopted and perpetuated.

every post arrives, and is confined to half the compass, to save the public at least half the impertinences of ordinary newspapers." Here is a strange fellow, truly! The editor of the first daily paper comes forward and recommends his journal to the public notice on account of three special merits: that it is but half the size of the other papers—that it has no private sources of information—and that it gives no comments or reflections on the topics of the day! Thus conducted, the single-page paper continued for forty days, when it passed into the hands of Samuel Buckley (the printer of the *Spectator* and the *Englishman*), "at the sign of the Dolphin, in Little Britain," who commenced on the 22d of April a new and enlarged series, consisting of *two* pages of news and advertisements, the former no longer confined to foreign extracts, but occasionally giving a few details of domestic intelligence. This Buckley had been originally a bookseller, but had now turned printer, and, if we are to believe one of his trade and a contemporary, John Dunton, he was a proficient linguist, and careful translator from the Latin, French, Dutch, and Italian, a fair critic, a punctual man of business, an acute tradesman, and a man of honour and probity. Besides the *Courant*, he also edited and printed the *Monthly Register*, and the effects of his industry and enterprise soon made themselves apparent in the former, for in the third number under his editorship we find twenty-one book advertisements. Buckley, in adopting a wider sphere for his labours, trod within the forbidden ground of parliamentary privilege, and, on the 8th of April, 1712, a committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the authorship of his paper, and on the 13th he was ordered into the custody of the serjeant-at-arms* for a "scandalous reflection upon the resolutions of the House," in having published the memorial of the States-General. On the whole, however, he must have kept on a good footing with the government,

* "Journal of the House of Commons," vol. xvii. pp. 175, 182.

for, in 1724, he is returned, in a list laid before Viscount Townshend, as "Buckley, Amen Corner, the worthy printer of the *Gazette*—well affected" (to the Hanoverian succession). Soon after this the *Daily Courant* fell into disrepute and under the suspicion of being a government hireling, till, in 1735, it became absorbed in the *Daily Gazetteer*. Buckley died September 8th, 1741, aged 68, and was buried at Hornsey.

In all the papers of this time the foreign intelligence is the fullest and best reported; the home news consists of vague rumours, equivocal hints, and obscure allusions:—

"*'Tis said* that the Czar of Muscovy was at the playhouse on Saturday to see the opera."—*Postboy*, January 15 to 18, 1697.

"*'Tis believed* that the Earl of Portland is by this time at Paris."—*Ibid.*

"*I hear* Mr. Robert Strickland is to be sent back to France forthwith by the king's orders."—*Ibid.*

"*I hear* the revel in the Temple will end on Friday next, at which time there is to be a masquerade."—*Postboy*, January 18 to 20, 1697.

"*They continue to say* that we shall bombard Sallee in the spring, and so destroy that nest of pirates."—*Postboy*, January 20 to 22, 1697.

"*We hear* that Mr. Bird, condemned for coining at Exeter, who was reprieved for some days, hath been since executed."—*Dawks's News Letter*, October 1, 1698.

"*It is said* the household of his Highness the Duke of Gloucester will be suddenly settled."—*Ibid.*

Political inuendoes were carefully worded:—

"*London, January* 30.—*Here is a talk as if* 900,000 pistoles were transmitted hither from France, for bribing some persons to favour the designs of that crown."—*New State of Europe*, January 1 to 3, 170½.

The leading papers, at the time when the *Daily Courant* made its appearance, were the *Observator*, edited by John

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Tutchin; the *Review*, by Daniel de Foe; the *Postman*, by M. Fonvive, a French Protestant; the *Postboy*, by Thomas, who was succeeded by Boyer; the *Athenian Mercury*, by John Dunton and Samuel Wesley; the *Flying Post*, by Ridpath; and the *English Post*, by Nathaniel Crouch. Of the rest (among which he enumerates the *Rehearsal*, the *Moderator*, the *Wandering Spy*, the *London Post*, the *Interloping Whipster*, &c.), John Dunton says, "they are such a rabble of hackney scribblers, they merit no place . . . . . a rabble of scandalous hackneys, fit for no company or honour but a house of correction."

The characteristics of the leading papers and their editors are thus described: "The *Observator* is best to towel the Jacks, the *Review* is best to promote peace, the *Flying Post* is best for the Scotch news, the *Postboy* is best for the English and Spanish news, the *Daily Courant* is the best critic, the *English Post* is the best collector, the *London Gazette* has the best authority, and the *Postman* is the best for everything."* We have already borrowed Dunton's character of Tutchin; let us hear a little about his contemporaries. Ridpath (the editor of the *Flying Post*, and author of "The History of the Works of the Learned") "is a considerable scholar, and well acquainted with the languages. He is a Scotchman, and designed first of all for the ministry. He writes the *Flying Post*, which is highly valued and sells well."† Boyer (of the *Postboy*, author of "Letters of Wit, Politicks, and Morality") "writes and translates like the famous L'Estrange. Mr. Boyer is the greatest master of the French language (witness his French Grammar and French Dictionary), and the most impartial historian (witness his 'Annals of Queen Anne') of any we have in England."‡ Crouch (who edited the *English Post*) "is a very ingenious person, and can talk fine things upon any subject."§ But of Fonvive, the editor of the *Postman*,

* Dunton's "Life and Errors," vol. ii. p. 438.
† Ibid. vol. i. p. 179. ‡ Ibid. vol. ii. pp. 431, 432. § Ibid. p. 436.

we have the most flattering character: "His learning deserves respect, and his gravity a weekly panegyrick. His sagacious look is an index of his thoughtful soul. He is ever cheerful (the gaining 600*l.* a-year by a penny paper would make any man so). To carry on his weekly chronicle (as to foreign news) he has settled a good correspondence in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Flanders, Holland," &c.* Great seem to have been the arrangements made, and care taken for procuring foreign news. English politics and domestic intelligence were secondary considerations; and, in 1709, the opening prospectus of the *Evening Post* (No. 1, September 6) says, in noticing the meagreness of the home department of the papers: "We read more of our affairs in the Dutch papers than in any of our own.' This was, perhaps, not so much from a lack of curiosity or interest on the part of the public in their own affairs, or from any difficulties in the way of collecting home news, as from a vague fear of the law and a painful remembrance of the days of the censorship; for we find a greater freedom in the written supplements which were issued by the *Postboy, Postman, New State of Europe,* and other papers, and which, to such subscribers as chose to pay extra for them, carried "the latest news, after the paper was printed." A volume of these was collected by Dr. Burney, and is preserved among his papers.

An original letter of the Rev. Robert Watts, M.A., dated "London: February 6th, 1707-8," gives us a little more information about the editors: "The author of the *Observator* is Mr. Ridpath, y^e^ author of the *Flying Post.* The base author of the late paper, which has been sometime since dropped, viz. the *Observator Reviv'd,* was one Pearce, an Exchange broker, sometime since concern'd in the paper called *Legion's Address,* and forced to fly on that account into Holland. The publisher of the *Phœnix* is a Presbyterian bookseller, named J. Darby, in Bartholomew Close,

* Dunton's "Life and Errors," vol. ii. p. 428.

who has told me that he was chiefly assisted therein by the famous Mr. Collins, the supposed author of the Use of Reason in Propositions, &c., and Dr. Tindal's familiar acquaintance."

The characters given by Dunton of the newspaper worthies indicate the growth of a higher standard of newspaper writing, and this was favoured by the party contentions of the reign of Anne, which again brought political controversy into the public journals, and, banishing the Grub-street writers to the rear, summoned to the foremost ranks the illustrious names of Addison, Swift, Steele, De Foe, Bolingbroke, and Prior, and established a style and standard of political writing. The *Tatler* of Steele and Addison was so much of a newspaper as to give, under the head of "St. James's Coffee-house," and following the fashion of the times, the latest foreign advices only, for which purpose Steele seems to have arranged a system of continental correspondence, for, in the prospectus (April 23d, 1709), he says, "I desire all persons to consider that I am at a very great charge for proper materials for the work, as well as that, before I resolved upon it, I had settled a correspondence in all parts of the known and knowing world." But the news articles fell off, and were totally discontinued at or about its eighty-third number: and, although it had not made any great sensation in the political world, next year (1710) the ministry of Harley and Bolingbroke mustered their literary forces and gave battle to it and its allies —Tutchin's *Observator* and De Foe's *Review*—in the *Examiner*. The troop who fought the fight of the government in this paper were Swift, Prior, Dr. Freind, Mrs. Manley, Oldisworth, and others, and their instructions, according to "Prior's History of his Own Time," "to aggravate the faults of the late ministry; to represent them as enemies of the Church and constitution; men who delighted in war; and to recommend an immediate pacification, which, indeed, at that time began to be much

wished for." Addison now flung himself into the battle with the *Whig Examiner*, which opened its fire upon the ministerial paper on the 14th of September, in defence of all who had been attacked by it, "to give all persons a re-hearing who have suffered under any unjust sentence of the *Examiner*." The *Whig Examiner* only extended to five numbers, when its writer carried his strength to the support of the *Medley*, in which Steele, Manwaring, Dr. Hare, and Oldmixon struggled with the *Examiner*, and published a last number in triumph over its rival's fall in August, 1711. The controversy was carried on with great acrimony on both sides, and we are not surprised that the gentle Addison so soon withdrew from it; it was a fight better adapted for the fierce Dean of St. Patrick's, who gnashes his teeth in frenzied rage at every attack that is made upon him, and displays his sense of justice and wholesome government by urging their prosecution on the ministry. "A rogue that writes a newspaper, called the *Protestant Postboy*," writes Swift, "has reflected on me in one of his papers, but the secretary has taken him up, and he shall have a squeeze extraordinary. He says that 'an ambitious tantivy, missing of his towering hopes of preferment in Ireland, is come over to vent his spleen on the late ministry,' &c. I'll tantivy him with a vengeance!"* "These devils of Grub-street rogues that write the *Flying Post* and *Medley* in one paper will not be quiet. They are always mauling the Lord-Treasurer, Lord Bolingbroke, and ME. We have the dog (that is, the editor) under prosecution, but Bolingbroke is not active enough, but I hope to *swinge* him. He is a Scotch rogue, one Ridpath."†

We believe the excellent dean was not indulged in his charitable desire of *swingeing* his opponent. He had procured, on the 23d of October, 1711, the committal to Newgate of Mrs. Popping (widow of the Popping of the "Dunciad") for printing the attack on him in the *Pro-*

* October 10th, 1711. † February, 1712.

testant Postboy, and the prosecution of Ridpath; but the latter, being allowed at large on a bail of 600*l.*, preferred his liberty to the money, and disappointed Swift's malice. The Dean, however, put him into his "Tale of a Tub," and perhaps got him a place in the "Dunciad:"

"To Dulness, Ridpath is as dear as Mist."*

In 1711, no doubt at the instigation of Swift, who is, however, not satisfied after all, Mr. Secretary St. John committed to Newgate fourteen editors, printers, and publishers, including the writers of the *Flying Post*, the *Protestant Postboy*, and the *Medley*. Sir James Mackintosh, in the House of Commons, on the 22d December, 1819, eloquently denounced Swift as a traitor to the press, and stigmatised him as "that parricide, who endeavoured to destroy the very press to which he owed so much—to which he owed all his fame, and, at that very moment, all his preferments."†

We should not be surprised if Swift also suggested to the government the imposition of a tax upon the press. He was so insincere that we do not believe him when he asserts the contrary: "They are here intending to tax all little penny papers a halfpenny every half-sheet, which will utterly ruin Grub-street, and *I am endeavouring to prevent it.*"—*Journal to Stella*, January 31, 1710-11.

By whomsoever suggested, a tax *was* laid upon newspapers in the shape of a red stamp, under the act which was passed for thirty-two years from the 10th of June, and came in force on the 1st of August, 1712 (10 Anne, cap. 19). The design of the first newspaper stamp was the rose and thistle united at the stalk, and enclosing the shamrock; the three national emblems being surmounted by the regal crown.

The pretext for this measure is thus described in Cook's "Life of Bolingbroke:" "Political pamphlets had so

* The printer of the Tory journal bearing his name.

† Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xli. 1819, p. 1485.

increased in number and in virulence that the queen concludes one of her messages to parliament by representing the licentiousness of the press, and she recommends the House to find a remedy equal to the mischief."

Under this act, every news printer was obliged to deliver one copy of each impression at the head office, if printed in London, and within six days of the day of publication; or to the district collectors, and within fourteen days, if printed in the country; together with "the title thereof, with the number of sheets, and the duty hereby charged shall be entered, which duty shall be paid to the receiver-general," &c. &c.; the penalty for a non-compliance with the provisions of the act being twenty pounds. The act, however, soon fell into abeyance, and the duties were not strictly levied until 1725.

There is something strongly confirmatory of our suspicions in the tone in which Swift predicts and gloats over the havoc which the act made among the smaller fry. "Grub-street has but ten days to live; then an Act of Parliament takes place that ruins it by taxing every sheet a halfpenny." "Do you know," he asks of Stella, under date of August 5th, "that all Grub-street is dead and gone last week? No more ghosts or murders now for love or money! I plied it close the last fortnight, and published at least seven papers of my own, besides some of other people's, but now every single half-sheet pays a halfpenny to the queen. The *Observator* is fallen; the *Medleys* are jumbled together with the *Flying Post;* the *Examiner* is deadly sick; the *Spectator* keeps up and doubles its price: I know not how long it will last. Have you seen the red stamp the papers are marked with? Methinks the stamping is worth a halfpenny."

The more kindly *Spectator* jocularly anticipates its effect: "This is the day on which many eminent authors will probably publish their last works. I am afraid that few of our weekly historians, who are men that, above all

others, delight in war, will be able to subsist under the weight of a stamp and an approaching peace. A sheet of blank paper that must have this new *imprimatur* clapped upon it before it is qualified to communicate anything to the public, will make its way in the world but very heavily. In short, the necessity of carrying a stamp, and the improbability of notifying a bloody battle, will, I am afraid, both concur to the sinking of those thin folios which have every day retailed to us the history of Europe for several years last past."*

This act, so arbitrary in its designs, so important in its effects, and so difficult to be got rid of (for it continued in force, with alterations, nearly a century and a half), was but a side-wind of legislation after all. The queen's message had gone down to the House in the beginning of the year, complaining that "by seditious papers and factious rumours designing men have been able to sink credit, and that the innocent have suffered." On the 12th of February it was resolved to hold a committee of the whole House for considering the best steps for stopping "the abuse of the liberty of the press." On the 12th of April, it was again considered: the legislature timidly fluttered between a renewal of the Licensing Act and a law compelling authors to put their names to the articles, but abandoned both ideas; and it was not until August that "some members in the Grand Committee on Ways and Means" suggested the laying a tax upon the press. How was this to be done? A bold and honest act for the purpose would have raised up a storm of opposition, so an act which was passing through the House for taxing soap, paper, parchment, linens, silks, calicoes, lotteries, &c., had a clause or two tacked to it, and the insidious blow was dealt—the newspaper press was taxed! The trick recoiled upon its projectors: the blow rebounded and struck them down. "It is curious to observe," says Cook, in his "Life of Boling-

* *Spectator*, Thursday, July 31st, 1712.

broke," "what an effect this trifling impost had upon the most favourite papers. Many were entirely discontinued, and several of those which survived were generally united into one publication. The bill operated in a directly contrary manner to what the ministers had anticipated; for the opposition, who had more leisure and, perhaps, more acrimony of feeling, were unanimous in the support of their cause; the adherents of ministers, who were by no means behind the opposition in their proficiency in the topic of defamation, were, it seems, not so strenuously supported, and the measure thus chiefly destroyed those whom it was Bolingbroke's interest to protect."

The Stamp Act certainly had the effect of ruining the lower class of newspapers which had fattened on the bad times when better papers could not live, and the wretched news sheets of prodigies and wonders were found too weak to bear the weight of a halfpenny stamp.

The shifts to which the newspaper proprietors were reduced in their efforts to contend against this impost were various. Those who were not appalled by it into immediate surrender doubled the price and increased the size of their publications, and the halfpenny posts, of which there had been so many, nearly vanished from newspaper literature, whilst not a few printers endeavoured to evade the tax by ingenious artifices, the *Reconciler* of May 13th, 1713, particularly, publishing two papers, or a sheet and a half at once.

The first panic over, and the duty not exacted after the first year or so, the Stamp Act may perhaps, on the whole, be regarded as having had a wholesome effect in purging the newspaper press and confining its management to men of character and respectability.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESSAY-PAPERS; THE "TATLER," "SPECTATOR," AND "GUARDIAN"—THE "EXAMINER," "MEDLEY," "FREEHOLDER," AND "ENGLISHMAN"—PROCEEDINGS AGAINST STEELE—HIS EXPULSION FROM PARLIAMENT—A SHOAL OF IMITATORS—ADOPTION OF "NOMS DE PLUME" BY PARTY WRITERS—ADDISON, STEELE, SWIFT, BOLINGBROKE, PRIOR, MRS. MANLEY, MANWARING, THEOBALD, AND THE MINOR NEWSPAPER WRITERS—THE RAGE FOR POLITICS AND NEWS—MORE GOVERNMENT PROSECUTIONS—"MIST'S JOURNAL"—FURY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—THE LAST OF STEELE AND ADDISON—"CATO'S LETTERS"—TRENCHARD AND GORDON.

Both Chalmers and Nichols have thrown their lists into some confusion by not having apparently at first come to a resolution as to what constitutes a newspaper, for both include all periodicals, without regard to the character of their contents. Thus they give the *Tatler* which *was* a newspaper, inasmuch as it dealt in news and politics, and the *Spectator* which *was not*, but merely a series of essays published daily; but this class of publication was so closely allied to the newspaper proper—written by the same men, and printed in the same form—that perhaps it would be drawing too fine a distinction to exclude them. The contest in which they were (all but the *Spectator*) engaged was a hot one, and the Dean of St. Patrick's turned up his sleeves to the elbow and *bludgeoned* his rivals in the High Tory *Examiner*. This paper was at first edited by Dr. William King, with the assistance of Bolingbroke, Prior, Dr. Atterbury, and Dr. Freind; but Addison and Steele had the best of the fight on the other side, and at the fourteenth number Swift was called by Harley to the helm to run them down. His heavy firing, however, could not silence the sharp musketry of the other party, and he

relinquished his post, at the forty-seventh number, to Mrs. Manley, who was subsequently succeeded by Oldisworth. Addison thus describes the character of the *Examiner*: "The *Examiner* was the favourite work of the party. It was ushered into the world by a letter from a secretary of state, setting forth the great genius of the author, the usefulness of his design, and the mighty consequences that were to be expected from it. It is said to have been written by those among them whom they looked upon as their most celebrated wits and politicians, and was dispersed into all quarters of the nation with great industry and expense. Who would not have expected that at least the rules of decency and candour would be observed in such a performance? But, instead of this, you saw all the great men, who had done eminent services to their country but a few years before, drafted out one by one, and baited in their turn. No sanctity of character or privilege of sex exempted persons from this barbarous usage. Several of our prelates were the standing marks of public raillery, and many ladies of the first quality branded by name for matters of fact, which, as they were false, were not heeded, and, if they had been true, were innocent. The dead themselves were not spared." *

The *Medley* (started 5th October, 1710), which, on the fall of the *Whig Examiner*, received Addison into its ranks, was written by Steele, Oldmixon, Bishop Kennet, Sir Samuel Garth, Dr. Hare, &c., and edited by Manwaring, and survived its rival, the *Examiner*, by a week. For his contributions to this paper, Oldmixon tells us that he himself received a hundred pounds down, and was to receive one hundred a-year, but could never get it.†

Addison was the principal writer of the *Freeholder*, and Steele of the *Englishman*, and as such the latter was singled out by the ministry for punishment. On March 11th,

* *Freeholder*, No. XIX.

† Oldmixon's "History of the Press for Thirty Years past."

1713-14, one Hungerford, a lawyer, who had been expelled the House of Commons in the reign of William III. for bribery, but had got back into it in these less scrupulous times, moved that the House take into consideration that part of the queen's speech which relates to the suppression of seditious libels, and took occasion to call particular attention to two numbers of the *Englishman*, which were alleged to fall under that category. He was seconded by Mr. Auditor Foley, a near relation to the lord treasurer, and supported by Sir William Wyndham, and, next day, Auditor Harley, brother to the lord treasurer, lodged a formal complaint against the *Englishman*, "said to be written by Richard Steele, Esq.," who was thereupon ordered to attend in his place next morning. The alleged libels were next day read, and severely animadverted upon by Auditors Harley and Foley, while Mr. James Scraggs, jun., would have defended them, but was prevented by the House, who clamoured to hear Steele. When he spoke, it was only to ask for time to prepare his defence, which, after some opposition from Auditor Harley, was granted him, and the subject stood over till the 18th. On that day, Auditor Foley opened the proceedings by moving that Steele should be asked whether he was the author of the obnoxious papers. To which the author of the *Englishman* replied, that he wrote and published the said pamphlets, and owned them "with the same cheerfulness and satisfaction with which he had abjured the Pretender." Then the storm came on. Steele was well supported: General Stanhope, Lord Finch, Lord Hinchinbrooke, and Robert Walpole pleaded his cause eloquently, and Steele himself spoke "with such a temper, modesty, unconcern, easy and manly eloquence, as gave entire satisfaction to all who were not inveterately prepossessed against him;" whilst at his elbow, whispering suggestions and words of encouragement during his three hours' speech, sat Addison. "The liberty of the press," cried Walpole, in an impassioned speech,

"is unrestrained; how then shall a part of the legislature dare to punish that as a crime which is not declared to be so by any law framed by the whole? And why should that House be made the instrument of such a detestable purpose?" The ministers had their redress at law; why, he asks, appeal to the parliament? Why? Because they were sure of a majority *there:* juries and judges could not be influenced so easily as the tried and trusty dependents whom Harley had under his control, and by whose votes (245 against 152) Steele, despite his own eloquence, the reasoning of Walpole, the inspired appeal of Lord Finch, was expelled the House of Commons:—

"Resolved, that Richard Steele, Esq., for his offence in writing and publishing the said scandalous and seditious libels, be expelled the House."—*Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. xvii. p. 514.

The Essay-papers had shoals of imitators; there were the *Hermit*, the *Surprise*, the *Inquisitor*, the *Pilgrim*, the *Restorer*, the *Instructor*, the *Grumbler*, and a host of trashy ephemerals, of which Dr. Drake has preserved an imperfect list;* besides the *Lover*, the *Plebeian*, the *Spinster*, &c., of Steele; the *Freethinker*, of Ambrose Phillips; the *British Apollo*, "performed by a society of gentlemen;" the *Female Tatler*, and a few others, which *did* display some talent. The *Female Tatler* gave offence to the Grand Jury of Middlesex, who presented it on October 19th, 1709, in the following curious terms:—"That great number of printed papers are continually dispers'd in and about this City under the names of the *Female Tatler*, sold by A. Baldwin, the *Review of the British Nation*, and other papers under other titles (the authors and printers of which are unknown to the Jury), which, under feign'd names, by describing persons, and by placing the first and last letters of the words and otherwise, do reflect on and scandalously abuse, several persons of honour and quality, many of the magistrates,

* Dr. Nathan Drake's "Essays on Periodical Publications."

and abundance of citizens, and all sorts of people; which practice we conceive to be a great nuisance, does manifestly tend to the disturbance of the public peace, and may turn to the damage, if not ruin, of many families, if not prevented; we, therefore, humbly hope this honorable Court will take such effectual care to prevent these abuses as to their great wisdom shall seem meet." "We hear," adds the *British Apollo*, with unaffected glee (for he and the *Female Tatler* lived a cat and dog sort of life), "that my Lord Chief Justice and the whole Court were highly satisfied with this presentment." The system of adopting a *nom de plume* to write under (as "Isaac Bickerstaff," of the *Tatler*, and "Nestor Ironside," of the *Guardian*), had to be copied by these imitators to make the resemblance more complete. Thus the *Female Tatler* (1709) was by "Mrs. Crackenthorpe;" the *Lover* (1713), by "Marmaduke Myrtle, Gent.;" the *Medley, or Daily Tatler* (1715), by "Jeremy Quick;" the *Political Tatler* (1716), by "Joshua Standfast;" the *Observator* (1718), by "Humphery Medlecott;" the *Theatre* (1720), by "Sir John Edgar;" the *Anti-Theatre* (1720), by "Sir John Falstaff;" the *Parrot* (1728), by "Mrs. Prattle;" and the *Universal Spectator* (1728), by "Henry Stonecastle, of Northumberland, Esq!"

Few of their writers deserve notice, and it would be impertinence to sketch the lives of many of those who do. For is not the every action of such men as Addison, Steele, Bolingbroke, and Prior already known to all of us? How differently have their characters passed through the fiery ordeal of party strife in which they were engaged! There have been (as there always will be, ill-regulated minds which delight in picking up an atom of dirt in the bright sunshine, or throwing their own gaunt shadow across a beautiful picture) those who have used their quills of goose or pens of steel to daub or scratch the fair fame of Addison, but what they could not reach they have had little success

in disfiguring. And we believe the world, wanting no directions from such writers, has embalmed the heart of Addison in its own. That he was a warm-hearted partisan, when party had raised every man's cold steel against his brother—but how different a partisan from Swift! (Halifax, Somers, Godolphin, Harley, ay, and Marlborough, bear witness to the virulence of party strife!)—that he was attached to the pleasures of the table at a time when judges went drunk upon the bench and parsons staggered into their pulpits, are the greatest charges that can be alleged against him. But has not a single stroke from his pen more than struck them out from before the retrospective eyes of posterity? Nay, his very weaknesses arose out of his virtues. His partisanship was dictated by his sincere and faithful heart—his social excesses were fostered by a too fond appreciation, and a lingering love of the society of his fellow-men. There is positively a halo around his head as he stands in company with Swift, Bolingbroke, or Prior!

Poor Steele! There is a prison air about him that has perhaps half stifled the conviction that while Addison had most feeling, *he* had most talent—of a good, honest, reckless, Irish kind. We feel that he was a sincere, thoughtless, perhaps not too sensitive, character: warm-hearted, honest, forgetting, or caring little that to-morrow he might be dependent himself, while to-day he was manfully asserting and supporting the independence of the country—drawing bills upon posterity, without a farthing to meet them. If the world were not what it is, and what it never can be, and prudence not a virtue, we might exalt him above Addison. But as a foil to both, look on the calculating Prior, or the clever infidel, Bolingbroke.

Swift appears to have been one of those beings whom Providence occasionally inflicts upon the world, blighting all they pass, poisoning all they come in contact with, withering all that clings to them. His demon tread crushed tender and loving hearts, his iron heel pounded and ground

to dust the love they gave him, and he passed on his way with a fiendish smile and a contemptuous sneer—he passed on, to scowl, to rage, and to hate. And where he went from the world into the outer darkness, a shadow has fallen, and men turn from the sight shuddering. The motives which guided his wretched course—the one instance of the canker of remorse having reached his soul—the cause of his rank and venomous hatred of his kind—all lie buried in the darkness of his own dark nature: inscrutable mysteries which we cannot probe, but turn from with sickening horror.

We can feel no pride in his genius, for we would fain disown him as a man—we feel no pity for his wretched end, for we feel no sympathy with his boisterous and warring life—we can find no excuse for his conduct, for his was conduct that could admit of none. An ingrate to his patron, a traitor to his party, a bully to his friends, an assassin to his enemies, an extortioner of flattery from his dependents, a mean groveller after wealth, a hater of his race, a liar to his wife, and a coward to his conscience, it did not want gross cruelty to two fond, confiding women, to make his memory execrable; a coarse libeller, a brutal jester, a vulgar satirist, a ribald priest, not all the talents he has ever had full credit for can allow of literature claiming a ray of lustre from his name!

In death he was a wretched Yahoo of his race, as in life he had been a base forgery of the image of his Creator.

In good company was Mrs. Manley. *Hers* was not the modesty to blush at Swift's ribaldry—*hers* was not the morality to be shocked at Bolingbroke's infidelity! But let us not judge her too harshly; her life was blighted when it was yet young by a false marriage being perpetrated on her by a miscreant of a guardian, her cousin, but who himself was married; and although this is no excuse for her writing indecent romances, for her many intrigues, or for her last immoral connexion with Alderman Barber, it should soften us in judging her memory.

Swift's friend and correspondent, Dr. William King, who projected and at first edited the *Examiner*, was little better than his colleagues. He possessed talents of a high order, but they are hidden behind his profligacy, his sensual indulgence, and his idleness, which thrice reduced him to a condition bordering on poverty. He was born in London in 1663, and educated at Westminster School under Dr. Busby. In 1681 he was elected to Christ Church, Oxford, and applied himself most diligently to study, taking the degree of M.A. in 1688. Having inherited a fortune from his father, Mr. Ezekiel King, he chose the law for a profession, and became a doctor and advocate at Doctors' Commons in 1692. Although displaying great abilities in his profession, he neglected it for pleasure, and was glad, in 1702, to accept the judgeship of the Admiralty in Ireland, where he was also made Commissioner of the Prizes, Keeper of the Records in Birmingham's Tower, and Vicar-general of Dr. March, the primate. Here he again fell into irregularities, and came over in 1708 to England, as poor as he had left it. He now joined the high Tory party, who rewarded him in 1711, when he was again much reduced, with the office of Gazetteer; but, although it had never been considered an arduous post, King found the work too heavy for his liking and threw it up, and lived precariously till the 25th December, 1712, when he died, leaving a name behind him as a poet which has gained him a place in Dr. Johnson's Lives.

On the other side, Manwaring is sufficiently respectable to deserve some notice. Oldmixon, who wrote his life in 1715, informs us that he was a native of Ightfield, in Shropshire, where he was born in 1668. Educated at Christ Church, Oxford, he chose the law for a profession, and came to London to follow it. In the course of a subsequent tour on the Continent, he formed an acquaintance with Boileau, and, on his return, obtained a commissionership of Customs, which, through the influence of Godolphin

on the accession of Queen Anne, was exchanged for a higher post; and in 1705 he was returned to parliament by Preston. He died at St. Alban's, November 13th, 1712, leaving an only son by Mrs. Oldfield, the actress.

The *Censor*, which appeared in *Mist's Journal* beginning April 11th, 1715, was the dreary manufacture of Theobald, the editor of Shakspeare, who has been so hardly used by Warburton.

Of the rest, the characters are concisely stated in the *Monitor* of April 29th, 1714: "*Guardian*, *Englishman* (defunct). From the ashes of which, phœnix-like, are risen: The *Lover*, the *Patriot*,* the *British Merchant*, the *Flying Post*, the *Daily Courant*, the *Examiner*, the *Postboy*, the *Mercator*, the *Weekly Pacquet*, *Dunton's Ghost*. The authors of those prints and packets: Mr. George Ridpath and Co.; Mr. Samuel Buckley, the learned printer; Mr. Toland, a Socinian heretick; Mr. Collins, a free thinker; Mr. Steele, a gentleman born; Mr. Asgill, a lawyer going to heaven by fire; Mr. John Dunton, lunatick; Mr. Abel Roper† and his man Toby, with divers others utterly unknown."

John Asgill, who was a member of both the English and Irish House of Commons, and at different times also an inmate of both the Fleet and King's Bench prisons, was an Irish lawyer of some repute. But, writing a treatise "On the Possibility of avoiding Death," he was expelled the Irish House of Commons. He fared no better with the English House, to which he was elected for the borough of Bramber, in Sussex. He wrote many pamphlets in favour of the Hanoverian succession, but all his loyalty did him

* "In No. 125 of the *Patriot*, January 20—22, 1714-15, the editor takes leave of the town, and avows his name to be John Harris, a young man who had not then seen two-and-twenty."—NICHOLS'S *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv. p. 88.

† "Ridpath and Roper, authors of the *Flying Post* and *Postboy*, two scandalous papers on different sides, for which they equally and alternately deserved to be cudgelled, and were so."—WARBURTON: *Notes to the "Dunciad,"* book ii. ver. 140.

no good, for at his death, in 1738, in the rules of the King's Bench, at the age of eighty, he had spent thirty years of his life in the Mint, or the Fleet, or King's Bench prisons.

A better paid writer on the same side was John Toland, the sceptic, who wrote a tract to prove there were no mysteries in the Christian religion. He was a native of Londonderry, where he was born in the lap of the Church of Rome in 1670; but at the age of sixteen he joined the Protestant Church, and went to the University of Glasgow, from whence he shifted to Edinburgh, where he was made Master of Arts, and went off to complete his studies at Leyden, and after residing there two years, came to Oxford, where he wrote his "Christianity not Mysterious." In 1707, he went to Germany, and in 1710 was introduced to Prince Eugene. On his return, Harley, then lord treasurer, took him by the hand and supported him, but, falling out of favour with the minister, Toland turned round and wrote warmly against him. He died in 1722, leaving behind him a character for great abilities but few virtues.

Dunton has taken great pains in his "Life and Errors" to acquaint the world with the occurrences of his own life, so spares us the trouble of describing a career not over remarkable or interesting.

The passion for politics and news which they themselves had fostered, seems to have even astonished the newswriters. "There is no humour of my countrymen," writes Addison, in 1712, "which I am more inclined to wonder at than their general thirst after news. There are about half a dozen ingenious men who live very plentifully upon this curiosity of their fellow-subjects. They all of them receive the same advices from abroad, and very often in the same words; but their way of cooking it is so very different, that there is no citizen who has an eye to the public good that can leave the coffee-house with peace of mind before he has given every one of them a reading. These several dishes of news are so very agreeable to the palate of my

countrymen, that they are not only pleased with them when they are served up hot, but when they are again set cold before them by those penetrating politicians, who oblige the public with their reflections and observations upon every piece of intelligence that is sent from abroad. The text is given us by one set of writers, and the comments by another. But notwithstanding we have the same tale told us in so many different papers, and, if occasion requires, in so many articles of the same paper; notwithstanding, in a scarcity of foreign posts, we hear the same story repeated by different advices from Paris, Brussels, the Hague, and from every great town in Europe; notwithstanding the multitude of annotations, explanations, reflections, and various readings which it passes through, our time lies heavy on our hands till the arrival of the fresh mail: we long to receive further particulars, to hear what will be the next step, or what will be the consequences of that which we have already taken. A westerly wind keeps the whole town in suspense, and puts a stop to conversation. The general curiosity has been raised and inflamed by our late wars, and, if rightly directed, might be of good use to a person who has such a thirst awakened in him."*

And again, in the *Freeholder*, he expresses a like astonishment, adding:—

"As our news-writers record many facts which, to use their own phrase, 'afford great matter of speculation,' their readers speculate accordingly, and by their variety of conjectures in a few years become consummate statesmen; besides, as their papers are filled with a different party spirit, they naturally divide the people into different sentiments, who generally consider rather the principles than the truth of the news-writer. This humour prevails to such a degree, that there are several well-meaning persons in the nation who have been so misled by their favourite authors of this kind, that, in the present contention be-

* *Spectator*, No. 452.

tween the Turk and the Emperor, they are gone over insensibly from the interests of Christianity and become well-wishers to the Mahometan cause. In a word, almost every news-writer has his sect, which (considering the natural genius of our countrymen to mix, vary, or refine in notions of state), furnishes every man, by degrees, with a particular system of policy."

This taste of the public was, at all events, not a very expensive one, and was easily gratified, for penny newsrooms were known in these days; it was probably not necessary to order refreshment at the coffee-house to procure a sight of the papers, if we read the following passage of the *Guardian** aright: "He lost his voice a second time in the extremity of his rage; and the whole company, who were all of them Tories, bursting out into a sudden laugh, he threw down his penny in great wrath and retired with a most formidable frown." He had been abusing the paper which he held in his hand, and for the perusal of which the penny probably was paid.

The government was so sensitive of the slightest irritation, that, like a man who unsuccessfully battles with the wasp that has stung him, it pressed so hard upon the stinging little writers who attacked it, that it got within the nest and brought down the whole swarm upon it. There were many journals conducted with more talent than Mist's, but the ministry contrived to give it an importance which did not belong to it by prosecuting it, and, as usual, the giant gained little in a contest with the dwarf. In July, 1718, Mist ventured to oppose the impending war, and asked of the government, "Who are you going to fight for? What have we to do in the quarrel? What will be the consequences? Whether the French will not run away with our trade?" In these four questions the government saw treason lurking, and to trace it to its home they

* No. 160, September 14, 1713 (not 150, as quoted by Mr. Knight Hunt).

searched Mist's house, and took his journeymen and apprentices into custody. In 1720 they again found it necessary, for the safety of the nation, to give Mr. Mist a check, and on the 13th of February that unlucky printer was convicted of printing in his weekly journal reflections on the king, for which he was adjudged to pay a fine of fifty pounds, to stand twice in the pillory, to be imprisoned for three months in the King's Bench, and to give security for his good behaviour for seven years. Still the serpent hissed—he was "scotched, not killed"—and the House of Commons was moved to interfere.

It espoused the cause of the wounded and bleeding constitution warmly; and on May 27th, 1720, complaint having been made of *Mist's Journal* of that day, it unanimously voted it "a false, malicious, scandalous, infamous, and traitorous libel, tending to alienate the affections of his majesty's subjects, and to excite the people to sedition and rebellion, with an intention to subvert the present happy Establishment, and to introduce Popery and arbitrary power;" and ordered that the Speaker should issue his warrant for the committal of Mist to Newgate (although he was already in custody of the Court of King's Bench), and on the 3d of June he was committed accordingly. It also resolved, *nemine contradicente*, that "An humble address be presented to his majesty, expressing the abhorrence of the House of the libel and its detestation of the author; assuring his majesty that it would stand by him and his family, and requesting that he would give the most effectual orders for prosecuting and punishing the printer and publisher of this and all other libels;" whereupon a committee was appointed to consider the whole matter.*

On the strength of these proceedings, the king, on the 11th June, issued a proclamation offering a reward of a thousand pounds for the apprehension of Doctor Gaylard, a writer in the journal, Nathaniel Wilkinson, a journeyman

* "Journals of the House of Commons," vol. xix. p. 562.

printer, and an apprentice of Mist's; and on the 5th July Wilkinson was arrested and lodged in Newgate. The spirit of the House of Commons is sufficiently displayed in the exaggerated course it took to suppress a paltry party newspaper. The piling up of epithets in its fulsome address to the king, and the largeness of the reward it sanctioned for the apprehension of a miserable printer, were in keeping with the expulsion of Steele and the attitude of hostility it now began to assume towards the press.

On December 4th, 1718,* George Bishop, printer of the *Exeter Mercury*, and Joseph Bliss, printer of the *Protestant Mercury* (Exeter), were ordered to attend the House and answer for "falsely representing and printing the proceedings of the House." The former attended on the 19th,† and explained that he copied the report from two written news-letters which were circulated among the coffee-houses of the city, which he handed in. He was voted to have been guilty of a breach of privilege, and taken into custody of the sergeant-at-arms, who was also ordered to take Bliss into custody for contempt in not attending. A committee was then formed to inquire into the authorship of the two written news-letters. The Exeter newspapers seem to have given great offence to the House, or the Exeter people were too inquisitive about its proceedings, for on the same day Andrew Brice, the printer of the *Postmaster and Loyal Mercury* of that city, was ordered to attend on the same account, and on his compliance on the 14th January, 1719,‡ he was summarily committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms.

Bliss, however, still escaped arrest, but, refusing to surrender, he pleaded guilty and miserably asked forgiveness. The serjeant-at-arms reporting that he had searched his house but could find no trace of him, the Speaker announced that he had received a letter from the offending

* "Journals of the House of Commons," vol. xix. p. 80.
† Ibid. vol. xix. p. 42. ‡ Ibid. vol. xix. p. 52.

printer, acknowledging his offence, begging the pardon of the House, and promising never to print any more of their proceedings, "and as upon his knees at the bar of this House, humbly prayed that the House would not proceed any further against him, which if they did, it would end in the ruin of himself and his children, he being wholly void of friends and money, and in no condition to make satisfaction for any part of his fees." The feelings of the House were touched; pity or pride "ordered that he be discharged."

Still there went forth on the wings of the mercuries and gazetteers a whisper of what the House was doing.

January 23d, 1722.—It being reported that the proceedings of the House were still printed in the newspapers —"Resolved, that no news-writers do presume in their letters or other papers that they disperse as minutes, or under any other denomination, to intermeddle with the debates or any other proceedings of the House. Resolved, also, that no printer or publisher of any printed newspaper do presume to insert in any such papers any debates or any other proceedings of this House or any committee thereof."* The attention of the House was again called to the subject on the 19th February, and a committee appointed to inquire into it.†

The House of Lords was no less jealous of its privileges than the Lower House, for we read in the *Weekly Journal* of March 30, 1723: "On Saturday last, one Mr. Read, a printer of a Whig journal, out of his abundant zeal to the present government, having printed in his said scurrilous paper of that day what he calls a list of the conspirators concerned in the late plot against his majesty, unadvisedly and foolishly inserted the name of a noble lord, viz., the Earl of Stafford, for which our poor weak brother was taken into the custody of the gentleman-usher of the black rod, by order of the House of Lords."

* "Journals of the House of Commons," vol. xx. p. 98.

† Ibid. vol. xx. p. 143.

The executive and the legislative powers worked together in this worthy conflict. In 1719, Sir Lyttleton Powys, one of the judges, writes to Lord Chancellor Parker: "I declared in all my charges in this circuit, as I did the two last terms at Westminster, that the number of base libels and seditious papers is intolerable, and that now a quicker course will be taken about them; for that now the government will not be so much troubling himself to find out the authors of them, but, as often as any such papers are found on the tables of coffee-houses, or other news-houses, the master of the house shall be answerable for such papers, and shall be prosecuted as the publisher of them; and let him find out the author, letter-writers, or printer, and take care at his peril what papers he takes in."* And on the 19th June, 1722, one Thomas Sharp was tried at the Guildhall, London, and convicted of printing the supplement to No. 10 of the *Freeholder's Journal.*

The effect of these prosecutions is apparent in the cautious tones of those journalists who sought to keep clear of them:—

"Several changes besides those that are mentioned are talked of at court, but we must not venture to name them before they are made, for fear of giving offence."—*Weekly Journal*, Dec. 29th, 1722.

"Whereas, on Saturday last, the 22d of December, there was inserted in the *Weekly Journal* that a gentleman of Hertfordshire had presented Dr. St. John with two fine original pictures of two reverend clergymen, his relations, deceas'd, we think fit to inform the publick that we were misinform'd in that account, and therefore make this publick acknowledgement, as we shall always think ourselves oblig'd to do in any the like cases."—*Ibid.*

The light which had been kindled in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* was now going out, but it still burned feebly in the *Plebeian* of Steele, and the occasional articles of

* "Fourth Estate," vol. i. p. 197.

Addison (now, alas! no longer friends) in the *Old Whig* of 1719.

A fresh fire broke out, and "Cato's Letters" blazed upon the town. The first of the series (which perhaps commanded an attention only second to "Junius's" and the "Drapier's Letters") appeared in the *London Journal* of 1720, with a view "to call for public justice upon the wicked managers of the South Sea Scheme." The author was John Trenchard, a Somersetshire man, bred to the law, but who relinquished his profession, and was appointed by William III. commissioner of the forfeited estates in Ireland, and sat for some time as member of parliament for Taunton. The scheme of the letters extending to other subjects of public interest, Trenchard employed as his amanuensis Thomas Gordon, a native of Kircudbright, in Scotland, but who had come the road so many of his countrymen were travelling, and was making a struggle for life by teaching languages. Being a man of good parts, Gordon soon helped to compose, as well as copy, the letters; and on the foundation of the *British Journal*, on September 22d, 1722, they were transferred to its columns. Trenchard died in 1723, aged fifty-four, and Gordon soon afterwards married (as second wife) his widow, obtained from Sir Robert Walpole the post of commissioner of wine licenses, and died in easy circumstances (for, by his marriage, he had obtained the estate which Trenchard had inherited from a rich uncle) July 28th, 1750, aged sixty-six.

"Cato's Letters" have been since collected into volumes, and gone through several editions. They, or some of them, were at one time ascribed to Lord Bolingbroke, but Gordon declares they were the production of Trenchard and himself only, and "from any third hand there was no assistance whatever." These two writers also brought out the *Independent Whig* in 1719.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GRAND JURY PRESENT THE PRESS—AND THE COURT OF ALDERMEN IS-WROTH—BENNETT, THE NEWS-CRIER—NUMBER AND CHARACTER OF THE NEWSPAPERS IN 1724—REVIVAL OF THE STAMP ACT—THE "CRAFTSMAN"—NICHOLAS AMHURST—BOLINGBROKE AND PULTENEY—"MIST'S JOURNAL" IN TROUBLE AGAIN—CONCANNEN, MOORE SMYTH, AND THOMAS COOKE—DR. CHANDLER, ARNALL, BUDGELL, AND MINOR CELEBRITIES OF THE PRESS—THE NEWSPAPERS CORRUPTED BY WALPOLE—THE "DAILY GAZETTEER"—STYLE OF NEWSPAPER WRITING—PROSECUTION OF THE "CRAFTSMAN"—EDWARD CAVE—A SYSTEM OF PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING—THE "GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE"—JOHNSON AND HAWKSWORTH—STRUGGLES AND TRIALS OF THE FIRST REPORTERS.

Not only were King, Lords, Commons, and Judges just now of the same mind about the press, but the Grand Jury of Middlesex, sitting at Westminster, July 3d, 1723, goes out of its way to have a blow at it. The *British Journal* of June 15th, 1723 (No. 39), having published an article deprecatory of charity schools, and not perhaps, over-complimentary to the general body of the clergy, the gentlemen of the grand jury are horror-stricken, and, in the course of a long presentment, thus break out into volleys of indignation. In the article they find "many impious, atheistical, and scandalous and false positions, to spread abroad and infuse into the minds of his majesty's good subjects abominable and villanous notions, tending to the prejudice and dishonour of our excellent government in Church and State." . . . . "Blasphemously reflecting upon God* and religion in general, scrupulously exposing

* This charge is perfectly false; we have read the alleged libel, and it can be made to bear no construction of the kind.

and traducing the great duty of Christian charity, to the scandal and offence of all pious and well-disposed Christians, but more particularly vilifying and traducing the members of the Church of England," "we therefore present the same as a most insolent, malicious, and scandalous libel, to receive such condign punishment as in justice it deserves." Now comes volley the second: "It reflects very grossly on the Government and present wise administration," and is "a very detestable and criminal suggestion, deserving a very distinguishing notice and reprimand from them whose characters are so freely dealt with by such mercenary newsmongers." "Mercenary" was thrown in at random, we suspect; it always sounds well, and finishes off an abusive period. "3dly. We think ourselves bound to observe the insolent and reproachful manner in which the two Universities are treated," "without any shadow of proof, truth, or reason." . . . . "All which we humbly conceive are calumnies of such an high and provoking nature, as we doubt not you in your wisdom will think worthy of due chastisement." The impeachment rakes up a few more hard words and ugly names, and closes with a bang. "The false and inodiating (!) scandal cast upon all those worthy gentlemen and clergy," which "maliciously and falsely avers," &c. &c. "All which aspersions are vile, scandalous, and reflecting on their honour, and ought to be punished accordingly. We therefore present the authors, publishers, and printers of the said libel, and particularly the said T. Warner, to be prosecuted as this court shall think proper."

To us, who are accustomed to see the Law wearing a sober garb, of dignified bearing and temperate language, even when most outraged, it is amusing to see how in those times it trusted to violent language, passionate exclamations, and abusive epithets to create an impression, not to say a prejudice, against the accused.

But, if the horror of the grand jury were sublime, we have

not far to go for the ridiculous:—"Last Tuesday night, Mr. Payne, publisher of a printed paper called the *True Briton*, was committed to Newgate by the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen for a contempt of the authority of that court in Monday's paper, and another before."—*Mist's Weekly Journal*, August 3d, 1723.

Contempt of the Court of ALDERMEN!

In 1719 died a newspaper celebrity, Thomas Bennett, a famous news-crier, described by Dunton as "that loud and indefatigable promoter of the *Athenian Mercury*." He was a well-known London character of the time, and a facetious epitaph on him is preserved by Timperley in his "Dictionary of Printers and Printing."

In 1724, the number of newspapers printed in London is handed down to us as, daily, 3; weekly, 5; thrice a week, 7; thrice a week halfpenny posts, 3; in all, 18.

The characters of these papers are given in a "Complete and Private List of Printers, &c. &c., humbly laid before the Lord Viscount Townshend," in this year. Among those "well affected to King George," we find the following news-printers: "Buckley, Amen-corner, the worthy printer of the *Gazette;* Matthew Jenour, Giltspur-street, and printer of the *Flying Post;* Leach, Old Bailey, printer of the *Postman;* Parker, senior, Salisbury-street, printer of the *Halfpenny Post;* Read, Whitefriars, Fleet-street, printer of a halfpenny post and of a weekly journal bearing his name; and Wilkins, Little Britain, printer of the *Whitehall Evening Post** and *Whitehall and London Journal.*" In the list of those "said to be high-flyers," we have, "Applebee, Fleet-ditch, printer of the *Daily Journal* and of a weekly journal bearing his name; Heathcote, Baldwin's-gardens, printer of a halfpenny post bearing his name; James, Little Britain, author and printer of the *Postboy;*

* This, the oldest newspaper now existing (and that only as an incorporated portion of the *St. James's Chronicle*), was established September 18th, 1718.

Meere, Old Bailey, printer of the *Daily Post* and *British Journal;* Mist, Great Carter-street, printer of a scandalous weekly journal bearing his name; and Sharp, Ivy-lane, printer of the *Freeholder's Journal.*" The Roman Catholic news-printer was "Berrington, Silver-street, in Bloomsbury, printer of the *Evening Post.*"

The Stamp Act of 1714 having, as we have already stated, fallen into abeyance, was now recalled into active existence by the parliament, which, as usual, placed the newspapers in strange company.

In committee of supply (February 1st, 1724), the House votes, for the king's service, duties on malt, alum, cider and perry, newspapers, ale, and beer. The part of the vote relating to newspapers runs thus:—

"Resolved, that it is the opinion of this committee that for every sheet of paper on which any journal, mercury, or any other newspaper whatsoever shall be printed, there shall be paid a duty of one penny sterling, and for every half-sheet thereof, the sum of one halfpenny sterling."*

This resolution appears to have been called for by the tricks of some news-printers to evade the duty, by "printing their news upon paper between the two sizes mentioned by the law," and entering them as pamphlets, which only paid three shillings on each edition.

The year 1726 saw the first number of a paper which made considerable noise in the political world, and whose name is still identified with the history of the time. This was the *Craftsman,* which first appeared under the editorship of Nicholas Amhurst (who assumed the name of "Caleb d'Anvers"), assisted by Lord Bolingbroke and Pulteney: the *Old Whig* started three years earlier, being principally written by that Duke of Wharton who has proved, in his own shameful career, that a cultivated mind and talents of the highest order can exist within and shine through the most corrupt of habitations.

* Journals of the House of Commons, vol. xx. p. 387.

Poor Amhurst's story is a sad one. It is not the old tale of persecution by the government, but of the cruel neglect of friends, of whom, with all his faults, he had deserved well. He was a native of Marden, in Kent, and, after the first part of his education was completed at Merchant Taylors' School, he was sent to St. John's College, Oxford, from which, for some unexplained misconduct, he was expelled. He then started the *Craftsman* on the Whig side, and waged a fierce war against Walpole, and it argues well for his independence that he stood out against a minister whose tactics were to buy up opposition at any price. He also wrote for the *Evening Post* in the name of "Philalethes." In the compromise of 1742 nothing was said of Amhurst: no terms were made for him by the party to whom he had been faithful: he was left as unprovided for as if the *Craftsman* had not laid one of the stones that paved the way over which its party marched to power. This unexpected, and we may believe undeserved neglect, preyed upon his spirits, and he died of a broken heart, at Twickenham, April 27, 1742.

"Poor Amhurst," writes Ralph* (himself a bookseller's hack), "after having been the drudge of his party for the best part of twenty years together, was as much forgotten in the famous compromise of 1742 as if he had never been born, and when he died of what is called a broken heart, which happened within a few months afterwards, became indebted to the charity of his very bookseller for a grave—a grave not to be traced now, because then no otherwise distinguished than by the freshness of the turf, borrowed from the next common to cover it."†

"His abilities," says Davies, in his "Lord Chesterfield's Characters Reviewed," "were unquestionable; he had

* The Case of Authors.

† "This worthy bookseller was Mr. Richard Franklin, of Russell-street, Covent-garden."—DR. DRAKE'S *Essays on Periodical Publications*, vol. i. p. 45.

almost as much wit, learning, and various knowledge as his two partners." This is very doubtful; but the influence the *Craftsman* attained to, and the position he held in relation to it, prove that it was from no incompetency or want of talent that his two insincere friends excluded him from the sweets of office.

Goldsmith, in his "Life of Lord Bolingbroke," says: "The *Craftsman*, though written with great spirit and sharpness, is now almost forgotten, although, when it was published as a weekly paper, it sold much more rapidly than the *Spectator*." And we are assured by Mr. Lawrence ("Life of Fielding") that "its influence was immense, the circulation sometimes reaching 10,000 or 12,000."

In a tract published in 1731, and entitled "Memoirs of the Life and Conduct of William Pulteney, Esq.," that statesman gets great credit for his tenderness of the freedom of the press: "When a design was on foot to wrest the liberty of the press out of the hands of the people, with what undaunted bravery did Mr. Pulteney step forward and place himself in the gap! He opposed himself singly against the united forces of a confederate cabal, who, conscious of their own guilt and unwarrantable proceedings, and fearing that they should not succeed, not only dropt their intended attempt, but denied that they had ever formed any such design." This praise was, as far as we can find, but little merited; and in the debate on the right of reporting the parliamentary proceedings, which took place in 1738, Pulteney declared against the practice.

In a time when all the papers began to be corrupt, personal, and scurrilous, it is no wonder that we find *Mist's Journal* again in trouble. On the 19th of June, 1729, Robert Knell, compositor, and John Clark, pressman, of that paper, were set in the pillory for publishing the number for August 24, 1728; and on March 25, 1732, the printers and publishers of *Fog's Journal* were arrested for "defaming the memory of King William." But, in 1737, old Mist

"ceased from troubling," and departed this life on September 20.

Mist's articles must have had *some* admirers, for we find they were reprinted in two volumes :—

"A Collection of Miscellany Letters, in 2 vols., Selected from *Mist's Weekly Journal*, being Essays, Political, Humourous, Moral, and Philosophical. Printed by N. Mist, and Sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster. Price Six Shillings."—*Weekly Journal*, July 20th, 1723.

The principal papers of this degenerate age were the *Craftsman, Daily Courant, Daily Gazetteer, British Journal, London Journal, Old Whig, Free Briton*, and *Grub Street Journal.*

Of the writers of these journals Matthew Concannen perhaps stands next to Amhurst, but how differently rewarded! A native of Ireland, bred to the law, he wrote for the *Daily Courant*, the *British Journal*, and the *London Journal*, till, by the influence of the Duke of Newcastle, he received the appointment of Attorney-General of Jamaica, or "was sent to administer justice and law," as Warburton says, sneeringly, in his note on a passage in the "Dunciad:"

> "True to the bottom, see Concannen creep,
> A cold, long-winded native of the deep."—Book II. v. 299.

He, however, appears to have filled his post with honour for seventeen years, and returned to London wealthy, in December, 1748. The change of climate soon brought on rapid consumption, which carried him off on the 22d of January, 1749.

John Dennis, the critic, was an occasional writer in the *Daily Journal*, together with James Moore Smyth, and Thomas Cooke, the poet. Smyth was a man of some social standing, and of considerable ability. His father had been one of the lords commissioners of trade in the reign of Queen Anne, and he himself had added the name of Smyth to his own, in order to inherit the estate of his maternal

grandfather. He had also received a liberal education, and whilst at Worcester College, Oxford, he wrote the comedy of "The Rival Modes." Being what we should now call rather a fast young man, talented, witty, and not too scrupulous, he joined the Duke of Wharton in writing the *Inquisitor*, a paper of such Jacobite principles that at last no printer would run the risk of bringing it out, and he then joined the *Daily Journal*, in which, in an evil hour, he charged Pope with a plagiarism of his "Rival Modes,"—a charge which was as unjust as it was foolish. The satirist of Twickenham flew to his arrows, and shot him through :—

> "Never was dash'd out at one lucky hit
> A fool so just a copy of a wit;
> So like that critics said and courtiers swore
> A wit it was, and call'd the phantom More." *

He died in 1734, at Whister, near Isleworth, being at the time of his death in the commission of the peace for Middlesex.†

A different destiny was Cooke's, who was a writer for the *Craftsman* and other papers as well as the *Daily Journal*. The son of an inn-keeper, he was born at Braintree, in Essex, in 1702 or 1703, and educated at Felsted Free Grammar School. In 1722 he abandoned the Bœotian fogs of Essex, and came up, buoyant with the hopes of sanguine youth, to seek a fortune by political writing, his strong revolutionary principles and unquestionable abilities soon associating him with Steele, Tickell, Phillips, Dennis, Willstead, and others of that party. He wrote, besides his newspaper labours, a good many poems and a few plays—the former are cared for but little now, and the latter, although played, were thought of as little at the time—but in one of them, the "Battle of the Poets," he attacked Pope and Swift, and suffered the usual penalty, being sentenced by Pope to the "Dunciad." He also

* Dunciad.

† Chalmers's "Biographical Dictionary."

translated Terence and Cicero, and according to Dr. Johnson, "lived twenty years on a translation of Plautus, for which he was always taking in subscriptions."* Poor fellow! this imposture was resorted to to feed his starving wife and child, and no doubt silently acquiesced in by the friends who saw through it. On the 20th of December, 1756, poor Cooke breathed his last in abject poverty, in a wretched house in Lambeth, and his friends were called upon for one more subscription—to place his wasted remains in the ground. This they did—and more: they supported his wife and daughter for the short remainder of their lives, for neither of them long survived him who had struggled for them so hard and so long, but so ineffectually after all.

Bland was a contributor to the *Daily Gazetteer;* the *High German Doctor*, an infamous paper, was written by Goode and Horneck; and the *Hyp Doctor* by that "a little more knave than fool," Orator Henley, under the name of Sir Isaac Ratclyffe, of Elbow-lane. Roome, the son of an undertaker in Fleet-street, but who became solicitor to the Treasury, wrote a satirical paper called *Pasquin*, in which he attacked Pope, with the never-failing result.

The *Grub Street Journal* (a folio up till No. 418, December 29th, 1737, when it took the name of the *Literary Courier of Grub Street*, and the shape of a large quarto) was edited by the Rev. Mr. Russel, and, according to Budgell, contributed to by Pope: "The persons thought to be at the head of the paper is Mr. R——l, a nonjuring clergyman, Mr. P——e, and others." (Dec. 1733.)

The author of the *Old Whig* (the offspring of the Duke of Wharton) was, at this time, Dr. Chandler, one of the very few respectable men then connected with the press. He was born at Hungerford, Berkshire, in 1693, and was educated for a dissenting minister. In 1706 he was chosen minister of a congregation at Peckham, and afterwards at

* Boswell's "Journal of a Tour in the Hebrides," &c.

the Old Jewry, when he also commenced his business as a bookseller in the Poultry. He was complimented by the universities both of Edinburgh and Glasgow with the diploma of a D.D., and elected a member of the Royal and Antiquarian Societies. His death took place on May 3d, 1766, and he was buried in Bunhill-fields burial-ground.

Among the news-writers of this time was Eustace Budgell, a relation and *protégé* of Addison's, who had contributed to the *Tatler, Spectator,* and *Guardian,* but who, now hastening on rapidly to ruin, lingered to pick up a scanty meal by the wayside from party-writing. The son of a clergyman at Exeter, he was born in that city in 1685, and sent to Christ Church, Oxford, to receive his education, on the completion of which he removed to the Inner Temple. When Addison obtained the appointment of secretary to the Marquis of Wharton, he took Budgell over to Ireland with him as one of his clerks, and there he soon obtained several lucrative appointments, as well as a seat in parliament. But he lost them all, and fell into disgrace for satirising the Duke of Bolton (who succeeded the Marquis of Wharton); and, to complete his ruin, came over to England, invested his money in the South Sea scheme, and lost 20,000*l.* when the bubble burst. He had now to write for his bread, and brought out the *Bee.* Poverty and desperation led to crime; he was suspected of forging a clause in the will of Dr. Tindal, the deist, by which he was to receive 2,000*l.*—a clause which was disputed and upset. Budgell was on the brink of destruction, and Pope gave him a gentle push into the abyss. Suspecting the poet of having written some unfriendly lines in the *Grub Street Journal,* Budgell replied in the *Bee,* when Pope sharply retorted:—

> "Let Budgell charge low Grub-street to my quill,
> And write whate'er he please—*except my will.*"

The allusion cut him down. The poor, broken, degraded wretch filled his pocket with stones and jumped into

the Thames, his miserable career closing with his fifty-third year.

For the rest, they were a disreputable lot; vultures called to the trade by the corruption which they scented. Arnall, an attorney (who commenced politics at the age of twenty, was pilloried in the "Dunciad," and succeeded Concannen in the *British Journal*), wrote the *Free Briton*, under the name of "Francis Walsingham, Esquire." He is said, nay, himself boasted, to have received in four years, out of the Treasury, the sum of ten thousand nine hundred and ninety-seven pounds, six shillings and eightpence, for abusing every one opposed to Walpole. Still he died in debt in 1741, aged twenty-six. "He not only wrote for hire," says Disraeli, in his "Miscellanies of Literature" (Calamities of Authors), "but valued himself on it." Proud of the pliancy of his pen, he wrote without remorse what his patron was forced to pay for but to disavow." The *Daily Gazetteer* of this time used to be sent through the kingdom with a Treasury pass, post-free,* and, in 1734, Dr. Webster (who wrote the *Weekly Miscellany*, under the name of "Richard Hooker, of the Inner Temple") declares that he was offered 300*l.* a-year and preferments, if he would change the politics of his paper—an offer which he magnanimously rejected! (This paper was, in 1727, written by R. Bradley, Professor of Botany at the University of Cambridge.)

The press was, indeed, corrupt again. But what shall we say of the government that controlled it! The *Daily Gazetteer* seems to have been the favourite of the government, and absorbed the *Free Briton*, the *Daily Courant*, and the *London Journal*, with their staff of mercenaries, who wrote according to the following arrangement: "The author of the *Free Briton*, on Thursdays; the author of the *London Journal*, on Saturdays, as usual; the gentlemen of

* Warburton: Notes to the "Dunciad." Book I. ver. 231.

the *Daily Courant* will choose for themselves such days as may be convenient to them."*

A nice coterie, truly, of whose caldron of political bubble Warburton says, in his commentary on the "Dunciad:" "Into this, as a common sink, was received all the trash which had been before dispersed in several journals, and circulated at the public expense of the nation. The authors were the same obscene men, though sometimes relieved by occasional essays from statesmen, courtiers, bishops, deans, and doctors. The meaner sort were rewarded with money, others with places or benefices, from one hundred to a thousand a-year." It appears from the report of the Secret Committee for inquiring into the conduct of R[obert] Earl of O[rford], that no less than 50,077*l.* 18*s.* were paid to authors and printers of newspapers, such as *Free Britons, Daily Courants, Corn Cutters, Journals, Gazetteers,* and other political papers, between February 10th, 1731, and February 10th, 1741.

The style of these fellows was in keeping with their character. They attacked each other by name and in the first person, and indulged in the lowest personalities. In a discussion which arose in 1735 on the question of the Bank Contract, "Caleb d'Anvers" (Amhurst), of the *Craftsman,* was opposed by "Francis Walsingham" (Arnall), of the *Daily Gazetteer,* and he or one of his writers thus commences a personal attack upon one of the rival writers: "Remarks upon Mother Osborn's account of the Bank Contract. About two years ago, this feminine dotard, through the promptings of her ignorance, with the assistance of her venality, was led into the avowal of doctrines that were perfectly infamous," &c. &c. (*Craftsman,* August 23d, 1735.) And, on the 6th of September, the same paper alludes to the editor of the *Gazetteer* as "that low tool Walsingham"—"a contemptible fellow who

* Prospectus.

is retained on purpose to assert falsehoods, and will either disavow or persist in them just as you" (Sir Robert Walpole) "are pleased to direct and pay him for it." On September 10th, the editors of the *Daily Gazetteer* reply on the part of Walpole, denouncing the "authors of the *Craftsman*" as "grovelling, abandoned, and despicable implements of slander." On the 30th of August they had published the following paragraph: "Whereas a certain tall impudent A[ttorne]y (eminently distinguished by his villanies in all parts of life), who suborned evidences to hang his benefactor that gave him bread when he was not able to purchase it, and was told in open court by Lord Chief Justice Raymond, in my hearing, that he and his confederates would have been hanged in any other country, is again admitted to be one of the writers of the *Craftsman*, and has last week thrown together a parcel of Billingsgate words about Mr. Osborn." *Fog's Journal*, of July 19th in the same year, in a parody on an address of Arnall's, makes him to say, "We never had any regard to truth;" that he "was hired," "trimmed in laced livery," and so on. And the public, not perceiving the insult to their taste or feeling, relished these editor-fights and author-baitings as if they had been the finest rhetoric, the subtlest logic, or the most convincing reasoning in the world! And side by side with these violent articles were philosophical essays and religious reflections, impressing upon the readers, just heated and exasperated with political discussion, the beauty of Christian charity, piety, and meekness, such as—"Of the Divine Providence" (*Grub Street Journal*, August 14th, 1732); "On the Lord's Supper" (*Weekly Miscellany*, August 16th, 1732); "A Defence of the late Book on the Sacrament" (*Independent London Journal*, August 9th, 1732); "On Evenness of Temper" (*London Journal*, September 13th, 1732), &c. &c.

The *Craftsman* was the paper of which Horace Walpole has written, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, that he was

assured by Franklin, the printer, "that Lord Bath never wrote a *Craftsman* himself; only gave hints for them; yet *great part of his reputation was built upon these papers.*" In these days such writings would be more likely to lose than to gain a reputation. Was the article we have quoted a "hint" of Pulteney or the language of the "lordly Bolingbroke?" It must have been the opposing papers of which the former wrote (1731): "There has been more Billingsgate stuff uttered from the press within these two months than ever was known before."

Faction blinded justice, and what was fair argument in the *Daily Gazetteer* was seditious libel in the columns of the *Craftsman.* Franklin, the printer, was always in trouble, and on May 13th, 1738, we find that "Henry Haines was sentenced to pay a fine of 200*l.*, to suffer two years' imprisonment, and to find security for his good behaviour for seven years, for printing the *Craftsman.*"

We are let into a view of the press in 1731 by the prospectus of the *Gentleman's Magazine,* which says: "Newspapers are of late so multiplied as to render it impossible, unless a man makes it his business, to consult them all. Upon calculating the number of newspapers it is found that (*besides divers written accounts*) no less than two hundred half-sheets per month are thrown upon the press only in London, and about as many printed elsewhere in the three kingdoms; so that they are become the chief channels of amusement and intelligence."

In the "Memoirs of the Society of Grub Street" (page 16) in 1737, it is stated that there are four evening post newspapers, "not to mention penny and halfpenny posts."

Whilst the government was arresting the writers and printers of *Mist's Journal,* there was one working steadily upon that paper and furnishing it with articles, who appears to have escaped its vigilance. But the danger he avoided in that capacity he fell into when working on his own account, and in March, 1727, Edward Cave, printer, was

committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms for writing news-letters containing an account of the proceedings of parliament. Whether it was Cave who furnished the good people of Exeter with a report of parliamentary doings, and against which we have already seen a crusade proclaimed, we cannot say (the *Gloucester Journal* was certainly prosecuted in 1728 for reports furnished by him); but it appears certain that he took advantage of a situation which he held in the Post-office to procure news from the provinces, which he sold to the London papers for a guinea a week. His connexion with the press, destined to infuse an entirely new element into it, and to elevate it into something more than an organ of gossip or a vehicle of abuse, was accidental. He was the son of a shoemaker in Warwickshire, and was born at Newton, in that county, on February the 29th, 1691, and admitted into Rugby School, falling under the care of the Rev. Mr. Holyock, who was in great repute for his training powers. He soon appreciated the abilities of young Cave, and befriended him till some unfortunate escapade was fathered upon the poor scholar, and he fell into disgrace and under a system of persecution that at last drove him from the school. He got employment under a collector of excise, but the wife of the collector, taking it into her head that she could make him useful in the domestic work of the house—an opinion with which young Cave could not agree—they parted, and our adventurer came up to London to seek his fortune. He did not find it in the first place he obtained, which was with a timber-merchant on Bankside, but he got at length apprenticed to Mr. Collins, a printer: the steel had flown to the magnet at last. In this congenial pursuit he soon made such progress that Mr. Collins despatched him to Norwich to superintend a printing-office and bring out a weekly paper, and in the latter duty he gained considerable local distinction. He married a widow before he was out of his time, and, his articles expiring

after he had lost his master, he worked for some time for Barber, a high Tory printer. By his wife's influence he obtained a clerkship in the Post-office, and was advanced to the office of clerk of the franks, in which, through too great an exactitude, he gave offence to the Duchess of Marlborough by stopping a frank, and was cited before the House of Commons to answer for a breach of privilege. He was further accused of opening letters for the purpose of detecting any abuse of the frank system, and finally dismissed from his situation.

He now purchased a press, and started as printer on his own account in that grim old gateway which strides across and frowns down upon Saint John's-lane, Clerkenwell, and which, after guarding the hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, came in its old age to be the cradle of the *Gentleman's Magazine*,* which Cave first conceived and printed here on January 1st, 1731. *News* was so prominent a feature in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, that it would have behoved us to notice it here even had it not been that a system of *parliamentary reporting* was vigorously set on foot and daringly practised by it for some years, and unquestionably laid the foundation for the present publicity of the doings of our rulers, which, instead of shaking, as it was once feared that it would, has without doubt increased the stability of our constitution. We have seen, in different stages of our history, how jealously parliament veiled its proceedings from the profane gaze, yet how often its vigilance was at fault. The history of parliamentary reporting is a history of persevering, almost obstinate, effort on one side, and of fierce and vindictive opposition on the other.

Sir Simmonds d'Ewes is supposed to have been the first parliamentary reporter, and he has bequeathed to us a journal of Elizabeth's parliaments. The session of 1621 was

* The title-page of the first volume states that it is "collected chiefly from the public papers."

also reported from a member's notes, and the proceedings of the parliaments of James I. and James II. are preserved in the Commons' Journals. Rushworth and Gray afterwards ventured to collect accounts of what transpired in parliament (but they were little more than lists of the votes), and the debates in the early part of the civil wars, although of doubtful accuracy, were recorded. Occasionally, during the reign of William III., some member, more honest or more conceited than the others, would send a copy of his speech to the newspapers (for which they generally got into trouble), and, in the time of Queen Anne, Abel Bowyer published monthly a pamphlet called "The Political State," which was an outline of the debates in parliament; and, in the following reign of George I., one or two *Historical Registers* professed to give reports of the speeches in parliament. But all these attempts sank into insignificance before the systematic proceedings of Edward Cave in 1736, which are thus described by Sir John Hawkins, who, having no selfish purpose to serve, may be taken as an authority in this case: "Taking with him a friend or two, he found means to procure for them and himself admission into the gallery of the House of Commons, or to some concealed station in the other House, and then they privately took down notes of the several speeches, and the general tendency and substance of the arguments. Thus furnished, Cave and his associates would adjourn to a neighbouring tavern and compare and adjust their notes, by means whereof, and the help of their memories, they became enabled to fix at least the substance of what they had lately heard and remarked. The reducing this crude matter into form was the work of a future day and an abler hand—Guthrie the historian, whom Cave retained for the purpose." These reports were tacitly sanctioned for two years, when the House of Commons, at the cry of its Speaker, Onslow, suddenly awoke to the horrors of its situation. "You will have," cried Sir Thomas Winnington, with his hair on end,

in the debate upon them on the 13th of April, 1738*—"you will have every word that is spoken here by gentlemen misrepresented by fellows who thrust themselves into our gallery: you will have the speeches of the House every day printed, even during your session, and *we shall be looked upon as the most contemptible assembly on the face of the earth!*" Winnington, in the excess of his wrath, has recourse to such equivocal expression that he may appear to have thought the speeches, if made public, would bring the House into contempt. Perhaps they would, though it was not what he meant to say. Sir William Young, on the same side, "earnestly implored the House to put it down;" Sir W. Pulteney, who has been held up as a friend of the press, spoke on this occasion as follows:—"To print or publish the speeches of gentlemen in this House, even though they were not misrepresented, looks very like making them accountable without doors for what they say within. Besides, Sir, we know very well that no man can be so guarded in his expressions as to wish to see everything he says in this House in print. I remember the time when this House was so jealous—so cautious of doing anything that might look like an appeal to their constituents, that not even the votes were printed without leave. A gentleman, every day, rose in his place, and desired the chair to ask leave of the House that their votes for that day should be printed. How the custom came to be dropped, I cannot so well account for; but I think it high time for us to prevent any farther encroachment upon our privileges, and I hope gentlemen will enter into a proper resolution for this purpose." Sir Robert Walpole expresses similar opinions; and there was only one member in that august

* The 20th is the date given by Timperley; but this is a mistake, as, on referring to the "Journals of the House of Commons," we find that, in consequence of the illness of the Speaker, the House did not sit on that day. In the "Parliamentary History" it is given as above.

assembly daring enough to utter an heterodox opinion. "I don't know," cried Sir William Wyndham boldly, "but what the people have a right to know what their representatives are doing."* But the result was a resolution in the same terms as had been carried ten years before:—

"Resolved,—That it is an high indignity to, and a notorious breach of the privileges of this House, for any newswriter, in letters or other papers (as minutes, or under any other denomination), or for any printer or any publisher of any printed newspaper of any denomination, to presume to insert in the said letters or papers, or to give therein any account of the debates or other proceedings of this House, or any committee thereof, as well during the recess as the sitting of Parliament; and that this House will proceed with the utmost severity against any and all such offenders."

Up to the passing of this resolution, Cave had merely given, in reporting the debates, the first and last letters of the speaker's name; but, this being voted a breach of privilege, he had recourse to an ingenious plan for carrying on the reports, and in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of June, 1738, they began to appear in "An Appendix to Captain Lemuel Gulliver's Account of the famous Empire of Lilliput," under the guise of "Debates in the Senate of Great Lilliput." The dukes were "Nardacs," the lords "Hurgoes," and the commons "Clinabs;" and the letters in their respective names being transposed or slightly disarranged, the Duke of Bedford appeared in the transparent disguise of "the Nardac Befdort," Lord Talbot, "the Hurgo Toblat," Walpole "Sir Rubs Walelup," Lyttleton "Lettyltno," Bathurst "Brustath," Fox "Feauks," Wynn "Ooyn," &c. &c. In this style only did the proceedings of the British Parliament reach the knowledge of its constituents till 1752, when Cave (who, for further security, had printed in his nephew's name) resumed his former system

* Parliamentary History of England, vol. x. 1738, pp. 800—811.

of giving the outside letters of the name, supplying the place of the rest with asterisks.

The debates growing in importance, Cave dismissed Guthrie as no longer equal to the task, and put in his place his valuable labourer on the Magazine, Dr. Johnson, who was then a young man of thirty. The Doctor began his task on the 19th November, 1740, and the way he went about it he described to Mr. Nichols: it was "to fix upon a speaker's name, then to make an argument for him, and conjure up an answer." Sir John Hawkins reports that at a dinner given by Foote, at which Wedderburne, Dr. Francis, Chetwyn, Murphy, and others were present, Dr. Johnson declared: "I never was in the gallery of the House of Commons but once. Cave had interest with the doorkeepers; he and the persons employed under him got admittance, they brought away the subjects of discussion, the names of the speakers, the side they took, and the order in which they rose, together with notes of the various arguments adduced in the course of the debate. The whole was afterwards communicated to me, and I composed the speeches in the form they now have in the parliamentary debates." But when he was balancing his accounts with the world before he left it, this fraud was a heavy item in the account. On the 7th December, 1784, only six days before his death, the good doctor told Mr. Nichols that "the only part of his writings that gave him any compunction was his account of the debates in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, but that at the time he wrote them he did not think he was imposing upon the world." Mr. Nichols also states that he frequently wrote three columns of these debates within the hour, and once wrote ten pages between noon and early in the evening. When Dr. Johnson relinquished the post, February 23d, 1743, Dr. Hawksworth, the successful student of his style, was appointed to it.

The House of Lords at length took cognisance of Cave's proceedings, and on April 3d, 1747, he and Thomas Astley,

printer of the *London Magazine*, in which his plan had been copied, were ordered into the custody of the usher of the black rod, "complaint having been made against them for printing in their respective magazines an account of the trial of Simon, Lord Lovat," and after undergoing several examinations, they received a reprimand, and were "discharged from custody on paying the fees, begging pardon of the House, and promising never to offend in like manner again."

In the report of the committee appointed to examine them, brought up by Lord Raymond on the 30th April, Cave does not cut a very heroic figure, and makes some answers and statements which rather startle us as being inconsistent with, or directly contrary to, the fact; but we suspect he made some mental reservation satisfactory to his conscience. He printed the report, he says, "inadvertently; he was very sorry for having offended; he published the said account from a printed paper which was left at his house, but he does not know from whom it came." On being asked if he had not been in the habit of publishing the proceedings of the House, he said: "He had left off the debates; he had not published any debates of *this* House above these twelve months; that there was a speech or two of the other House put in at the latter end of last year." The next is very like a lubberly schoolboy's plea: "He was extremely sorry for it: it was a great presumption, but he was led into it by custom and the practice of other people." In explanation of his system, he says: "He got into the House and heard them, and made use of a black-lead pencil, and only took notes of some remarkable passages, and from his memory he put them together himself... Sometimes he had speeches sent him by the members themselves, and has had assistance from some members who have taken notes of other members' speeches.... *He never had any person whom he kept in pay to make speeches for him.*"

Notwithstanding his penitence and his promise, Cave

resumed, in 1752, his publication of the debates, although in a conciser form and in a letter prefaced thus: "The following heads of speeches in the H—— of C—— were given me by a gentleman who is of opinion that members of parliament are accountable to their constituents for what they say as well as what they do in their legislative capacity; that no honest man who is entrusted with the liberties and purses of the people will ever be unwilling to have his whole conduct laid before those who so entrusted him without disguise; that if every gentleman acted upon this just, this honourable, this constitutional principle, the electors themselves only would be to blame if they re-elected a person guilty of a breach of so important a trust." The anonymous and probably imaginary gentleman who entertains these high-minded sentiments, accompanies his report with this introduction: "I send you a speech in the committee of supply. You may be assured they are really genuine, and not such an imposition upon the speakers and the public as some that have appeared in other monthly collections."

Cave had fought the good fight and gained the victory, for although the parliament occasionally growled at the printers of its debates it could never stop them, and to Cave we are indebted for the right (not yet acknowledged openly, but tacitly conceded) which he won for us by his indomitable courage, his steady perseverance, his earnest resolution, and his untiring industry—the right of knowing how far our representatives act up to their promises and their principles. He was, as he deserved to be, well rewarded. Although he had many imitators, the *Gentleman's Magazine* kept the lead and made his fortune. He turned his wealth to good account, fostering and encouraging obscure merit, and died on the 10th January, 1754, not long surviving his wife, whose decease had brought on a mental depression which perhaps hastened his end.*

* Johnson's "Life of Cave."

The debates, as manufactured by Dr. Johnson, long passed current as the *verba ipsa* of the members; and, indeed, chiefly were those honourable gentlemen indebted to the worthy Doctor for the ornaments and polish which he put upon their speeches, and the cunning strokes of logic and beautiful flowers of rhetoric of which they were incapable, but for which they got credit by his means. Voltaire is said to have put down the debates with the exclamation, "The eloquence of Greece and Rome is revived in the British senate!"* If so, Dr. Johnson was the conjuror who revived it. Fielding saw through the trick. "Even among the moderns," he says, in his "Jonathan Wild," "famous as they are for elocution, it may be doubted whether those inimitable harangues, published in the monthly magazines, came literally from the mouths of the Hurgoes, &c., as they are there inserted, or whether we may not rather suppose some historian of great eloquence hath borrowed the matter only, and adorned it with those rhetorical flowers for which many of the said Hurgoes are not so extremely eminent."

It was a great power that Johnson wielded, for he managed to have it all his own way, or, as he himself expressed it, "*took care the Whig* DOGS *should never have the best of the argument!*"

The *London Magazine*, the *Universal Magazine*, *Martin's Miscellany*, the *European Magazine*, and a host of others, modelled upon Cave's, gave up, like his, some eight pages, of two columns each, every month to news, so that they may be considered in the light of monthly newspapers, in which light the government at one time viewed them, and unsuccessfully attempted to impose the newspaper stamp upon them; in fact, the *Universal Magazine*, giving a list of its departments (which extends to twenty-seven and ends with an "&c."), places "News" at its head; and they all contain "an Historical Register of Foreign and

* Hawkins's "Life of Johnson."

Domestick Intelligence," "News from the Plantations in America," "Births, Marriages, and Deaths," Promotions in the Army and Navy, Ecclesiastical Preferments, Government Despatches, "Persons declared B——pts," Prices of the Funds, Market Reports, Lists of the Performances at the Theatres, and, in fact, all the essential features of a newspaper.

In 1739, a prosecution was set on foot by the East India Company against Matthew Jenour of the *Daily Advertiser*, for a libel which appeared on October the 8th, accusing a director of raising the price of green tea by speculation. The question at law was raised and argued, whether the Company *could* prosecute him in its corporate capacity; but it was ruled in the King's Bench in Michaelmas Term, 1740, against Jenour, and from that day corporate bodies have assumed the right which he disputed with it.*

* Barnewall and Alderson's Reports of Cases, &c. vol. v. p. 596. Modern Reports, vol. vii. p. 400.

CHAPTER X.

THE REBELLION, AND THE PAPERS IT CALLED FORTH—HENRY FIELDING—THE "CHAMPION"—THE "TRUE PATRIOT," AND "JACOBITES' JOURNAL"—FIELDING'S SKETCHES OF THE NEWS-WRITERS—UNSTAMPED PAPERS—FIELDING AND HIS ASSAILANTS—A SPECIMEN OF THEIR SCURRILITY—WILLIAM GUTHRIE AND JAMES RALPH—PROSECUTION OF THE "NATIONAL JOURNAL"—A FEW CELEBRITIES OF THE PRESS—DR. JOHNSON AND THE NEWSPAPERS—THE DOCTOR A NEWSPAPER DRUDGE.

WHILST the reporters had been struggling to get into the House of Commons, with the pertinacity and ultimate success which we have described, the swarm of political writers were thrown into commotion by events which were crowding on and plots which were thickening. The young Pretender had raised the standard of insurrection, and thrown a plentiful supply of food to their hungry pens; but now, pushing them good-naturedly aside, there strides forward a doughty champion of the house of Hanover, who flings before the public sheet after sheet of remonstrance or argument, and over his adversaries a heap of ridicule and sarcasm. The people were not overmuch attached to the German rule: the Highlanders were marching on from success to success; and, for a brief period, the second restoration of the Stuarts seemed not so unlikely an event after all. It was at this crisis that the playwright turned politician, and by turns grave and gay, laughing and moralising, but always studiously disclaiming partisanship, HENRY FIELDING takes his place in the ranks of the newspaper writers. At an earlier period (in 1739) he had been part proprietor and writer of the *Champion*—a thrice-a-week essay-paper, which he wrote conjointly with James Ralph

(a poor mercenary), under the name of "Captain Hercules Vinegar." To the *Champion* was attached a supplement, called an "Index to the Times," which contained the current news of the day, and was compiled by Ralph, who assumed the name of "Lilburne." As the time approached when Fielding was to be called to the Bar, he gradually withdrew from the *Champion*, and had nothing to do with the periodical press till the Whig cause staggered under the heavy blows it was sustaining from the Jacobites, when he rushed to the rescue with the *True Patriot*, the first number of which came out on the 5th of November, 1745. In his opening address he gives us a picture of the newspaper press at that time, which, taken with all due allowance, is not very flattering:—

"In strict obedience to the sovereign power (fashion), being informed by my bookseller, a man of great sagacity in his business, that nobody at present reads anything but newspapers, I have determined to conform myself to the reigning taste. The number, indeed, of these writers at first a little staggered us both, but upon perusal of their works, I fancied I had discovered a little imperfection in them all, which somewhat diminished the force of this objection. . . . . The first little imperfection in these writings is that there is scarce a syllable of TRUTH in any of them. If this be admitted to be a fault, it requires no other evidence than themselves and the perpetual contradictions which occur, not only on comparing one with the other, but the same author with himself on different days. Secondly, there is no SENSE in them. To prove this, likewise, I appeal to their works. Thirdly, there is in reality NOTHING *in them at all.* And this also must be allowed by their readers, if paragraphs which contain neither wit nor humour, nor sense, nor the least importance, may be properly said to contain nothing. Such are the arrival of my Lord —— *with a great equipage;* the marriage of Miss ——, *of great beauty and merit;* and the death of Mr. ——,

who was never heard of in his life, &c. &c. Nor will this appear strange if we consider who are the authors of such tracts—namely, the journeymen of booksellers, of whom, I believe, much the same may be truly predicated as of these their productions. But the encouragement with which these lucubrations are read may seem more strange and more difficult to be accounted for. And here I cannot agree with my bookseller, that their eminent badness recommends them. The true reason is, I believe, simply the same which I once heard an economist assign for the content and satisfaction with which his family drank water-cider—viz., because they could procure no better liquor. Indeed, I make no doubt but that the understanding as well as the palate, though it may out of necessity swallow the worse, will in general prefer the better."

Fielding was, we dare say, not very far out after all in his estimate; for the newspaper press, which we have seen gradually corrupted by Walpole, was recruited, as its more powerful members were bought off, from the ranks of an irregular squad; and for the last few years the unstamped papers had been rapidly increasing, and were openly hawked about in defiance of the law, whilst the regular papers were being amalgamated or entirely discontinued. Indeed, it had been found necessary in 1743 to insert a clause into the 16th George II., cap. 26, declaring that, "whereas great numbers of newspapers, pamphlets, and other papers subject and liable to the stamp duties, but not being stamped, were daily sold, hawked, carried about, uttered, and exposed for sale by divers obscure persons who have no known or settled habitation, it is enacted that all hawkers of unstamped newspapers may be seized by any person, and taken before a justice of the peace, who may commit them to gaol for three months." A reward of twenty shillings was also offered to the informer who might secure a conviction.

The *True Patriot*, coming at such a time, among such

competitors, from a vigorous writer who threw himself heart and soul into the cause—not hastily taken up, but one to which he had all along been warmly attached—we say the *True Patriot*, written by such a man and in such a manner, could not fail of concentrating the distracted attention of the nation. The affrighted citizens read it for comfort and reassurance, and had more confidence in its arguments than in the camp at Finchley. The hesitating Jacobites were dismayed by the tone of ridicule with which it spoke of their cause; and when the final blow crushed them to the ground and drove the young Pretender a fugitive from the field of Culloden, its merciless satire did more to extinguish all feelings of sympathy with the broken party than the savage butcheries of the Duke of Cumberland, or the cold-blooded atrocities of the law—which, in fact, but for Fielding's more destructive sarcasm, might have had just the opposite effect.

The paper continued until April 15th, 1746; and in the following year, "to discredit the shattered remnant of an unsuccessful party," as Sir Walter Scott says in his "Life of Fielding," by covering it with ridicule and holding it up to national contempt, he conceived and brought out, with the encouragement, as it is thought, of the government, the *Jacobite Journal*, which was commenced in December, 1747, as the production of "John Trottplaid, Esq.," and bore the representation of Mr. and Mrs. Trottplaid; the former wearing a plaid waistcoat, and the latter a plaid petticoat, and both lustily huzzaing, whilst a Jesuit is assiduously calling their attention to a copy of the *London Evening Post*. The first number presents us with another unfavourable view of the contemporary press:—

"If ever there was a time when a weekly writer might venture to appear, it is the present; for few readers will imagine it presumption to enter the lists against those works of his contemporaries which are now known by the name of newspapers, since his talents must be very indif-

ferent if he is not capable of shining among a set of such dark planets."

And the affectation of printing so many words in italics, without any rule or reason, and expressing only the first and last letters of others, of which we shall give some examples presently, were not lost upon the watchful satirist, who thus whimsically imitates it:—

"In this dress I intend to abuse the * * * and the * * *; I intend to lash not only the m—stry, but *every man* who *hath* any p—ce or p—ns—n from the g—vernm—t, or who is entrusted with *any degree* of *power* or *trust* under it, let his r—nk be ever so *high*, or his ch—r—cter never so *good*. For this purpose I have provided myself with a *vast* quantity of *Italian* letter, and asterisks of all sorts. And as for all the words which I *embowel*, or rather *envowel*, I will never so mangle them but they shall be as well known as if they retained every vowel in them. This I promise myself, that when I have any meaning they shall understand it."

The unscrupulous tribe of writers whom he attacked and ridiculed in these papers caught up the only weapons they could wield—scurrility and abuse,—and attacked him with the fury of the intellectual pigmies that they were. *Old England, or the Constitutional Journal*—a weekly paper in opposition, principally written by Guthrie, but to which Lord Chesterfield was an occasional contributor—gives us, on the 3d of March, an average sample of the language in which they replied, describing Fielding as "a needy vagrant who long hunted after fortunes, scored deep at taverns, abused his benefactors in the administration of public affairs, from the state to the stage; hackneyed for booksellers and newspapers; lampooned the virtuous; ridiculed all the inferior clergy in the dry, unnatural character of Parson Adams; related the adventures of footmen, and wrote the lives of thief-catchers; bilked every lodging for ten years together, and every alehouse and every chandler's shop in

every neighbourhood; defrauded and reviled all his acquaintances, and meeting and possessing universal infamy and contempt."

Fielding might indeed be well content with this character from men who thought Parson Adams "dry and unnatural;' well might he smile at being called a bookseller's and newspaper hack by such writers as Guthrie and his fellows.

The government formed a better estimate, and one which was not disappointed by the way in which he fulfilled his duties as a magistrate for Middlesex and Westminster,—an office which they conferred upon him at the earnest solicitation of his old schoolfellow and faithful friend George Lyttleton, now a lord of the Treasury. Of course this appointment, which, if it had been given in reward for his services (which it undoubtedly was not), would have been a very inadequate one, gave an opportunity for the ungenerous remarks of his enemies of Grub-street; but the manner in which he performed his duties, driving corruption from the bench and putting justice in its place, remains recorded as a noble reply to their calumnies. The appointment took place at the close of the year 1748, the *Jacobite Journal* having ceased in November of that year, from a conviction of its conductors that the Jacobite cause was entirely disarmed by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. *Old England* exulted over the decease of Mr. Trottplaid in a scurrilous epitaph, which thus opens with a spiteful and personal attack:—

"Beneath this stone
Lies Trottplaid John,
His length of chin and nose;
His crazy brain,
Unhum'rous vein
In verse and eke in prose."*

William Guthrie, the principal writer of *Old England*, is the same man who afterwards, as we have already seen,

* *Old England, or the Broad-Bottom Journal*, November 20th, 1748.

made up the "Parliamentary Debates" for Cave. A needy Scotchman, sent forth from Aberdeen to seek a living from the world of letters, he fell into the hands of the booksellers, who plucked him and sold his feathers. A publisher's drudge, besides having to do with many of the newspapers, he wrote several works to order, amongst others, a history of England, which nobody ever reads, and a geographical grammar, which was at the time thought a work of merit, but is of course now obsolete. He died in 1769, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. Sir John Willes, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, was suspected to have written the attack on Murray (afterwards Lord Mansfield) in *Old England* of December 27th, 1746.

A hireling confederate of Fielding's—certainly in the *Champion*, and probably in his other papers—was James Ralph, formerly a schoolmaster at Philadelphia, but who came to London about 1729, and embarked as a party writer with a capital of considerable talent. Unfortunately, it was about the only capital he possessed; of money he had little, and of principle less; and he tossed about on the troubled sea of politics, as all have done who have ventured upon it with only talent for their ballast, and got cast here and there with every change of the political current. Ralph, who aspired to the title of historian, and wrote a forgotten history of England, also tried, with the versatility to which hard necessity occasionally drove him, what he could make out of the stage, and wrote some plays and a poem, which elevated him to a place in the "Dunciad," in a note to which he is described as a low and illiterate writer. This was not true; for he was certainly a Latin, French, and Italian scholar. His connexion with the stage brought him into the acquaintance of Fielding, and they went to work together at the *Champion*. Poor Ralph (who wrote the pitiful "Case of Authors") was, like most of his contemporary labourers, well acquainted with poverty and want, and Mr. Nichols has preserved some of

his cries for bread in the ninth volume of the "Literary Anecdotes." "I am now really at my last resource till my play is finished," he writes at last, in the accents of despair, "and, unless you can relieve me, both that and I shall die together." Bubb Dodington took him up, and in his service he brought out the *Remembrancer*—an organ of the Dodington section of the Leicester House party, which received a gentle check from the government in 1749:—

"*November 24th.*—Earl of Middlesex and Mr. Ralph were with me to acquaint me that the printer and publisher of the *Remembrancer* was taken up for his paper of last Saturday, the 18th instant, but that the messenger used them with uncommon civility, touched none of their papers, presses, or effects, and took their words for their surrendering themselves the next morning."*

We are afterwards told that the Prince of Wales agrees to indemnify them against all loss or damage.

Dodington, though he speaks of him as "honest Mr. Ralph," admits that he was "ready to be hired to any cause." Poor fellow! life was sweet and bread was dear, and the highest bidder had him; but in 1762 the politicians and the booksellers lost their drudge, for death outbid them all.

We have given Fielding's parody of a newspaper article. Compare it with an original or two:—"Towards the close of the last session, the F——t L——d of the T——y was *missing*. In a day or two it came out that his G——e was gone down to the sea coast with Miss N——y P——s, to attend her on board a vessel for France. About the end of March an express arrived at Dover, ordering one of the packets to be got ready for the Confidential S——y of the T——y. He came in the evening and embarked for Calais. Various were the speculations of the people of Dover on the purport of this embassy at such a busy time. Lo! the Secretary returned with his errand, Miss N——y P——s

* Diary of Bubb Dodington.

in his hand. On Wednesday the 14th April his G——e attended Mrs. H——w, *commonly* called Miss N——y P——s, to Ranelagh, and the Saturday following, he introduced her to the Opera, and sat behind her in waiting. It is only the prerogative of a F——t M——r to appear with his mistress in public, and to show her more respect than he ever showed his wife."—*Political Register*, May, 1758.

In the November number the Duke of Grafton is again attacked in somewhat similar style:—

"*Q.*—Who made you P——e M——r?

"*A.*—Some little assurance and a great deal of b——gh interest." And so on.

Now for an italicised article:—

"The French, it seems, despairing of Carrying their Point by *Insinuations*, have recurred to their old Method of *Threatening*, and, by their *proper Herald* the *Amsterdam Gazette*, menace us with *Fishing Barks, flat-bottom'd Boats, Troops on the Coast*, or, in their *own* Phrase, nothing less than a *Descent* upon *England*. In this Situation, the first Thing to be done is to enquire into the *State* of our MILITIA, more especially in the *Maritime Counties*, and if there be *any* in which the MILITIA is not *raised* pursuant to the *Laws* for that *Purpose*, to enquire strictly into the *Cause*; in which we presume that we point at nothing but what is *Just*, and that *Statutes* are made to be *obeyed*, as the *Excise* and *Customs* are levied in *one County*, as well as in *Another*."—*London Evening Post*, February 6th, 1759.

These specimens fully justify Fielding's description.

Notwithstanding the violence of the papers and the character of their writers, we only find them in one instance brought into collision with the Government by the events of 1745-6, and that was in the case of the *National Journal, or Country Gazette*, an evening paper started on March 22d, 1746, and attacking the Government so intemperately that on the 12th of June the printer was committed to prison, and not released until February, 1747,

on the expiration of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

A copy of "Newsmen's Verses" of this time, dated 1747, has come down to us, in which the vendor passes a slight upon the character of the papers for veracity:—

> "Our calling, however the vulgar may deem,
> Was of old both on high and below of esteem;
> E'en the gods were to much curiosity given,
> For Hermes was only the newsman of Heaven.
> Hence, with wings to his cap, and his staff and his heels,
> He depictured appears, which our myst'ry reveals—
> That *News* flies like wind, to raise sorrow or laughter,
> While, leaning on Time, *Truth* comes heavily after."*

Of the next ten years of newspaper history we have but little to record. Among the writers of the various periodical papers which flourished in that interval were Mrs. Heywood, who wrote the *Parrot* in 1746; Lords Chesterfield and Lyttleton, contributors to *Common Sense*, the former writing occasionally in *Old England;* Sir John Hill, who wrote "The Inspector" for two years in the *Daily Advertiser*, commencing in March, 1751; Arthur Murphy, the writer of the *Gray's Inn Journal*, under the name of "Charles Ranger, Esq." October 21st, 1752; Edward Moore, the author of the "Gamester," who commenced the *World* January 4th, 1753, and was assisted by the Earl of Chesterfield, and some thirty contributors of eminence; Bonnell Thornton, who wrote the *Drury Lane Journal* (in opposition to Fielding's *Covent Garden Journal*, started on the 4th of January, 1752, by "Sir Alexander Drawcansir, Knight"), and who afterwards united himself with George Colman in the *Connoisseur*, commenced January 31st, 1754, "by Mr. Town Critic and Censor General;" Dr. William King, of the *Dreamer*, in 1754; and the much-belauded Alderman Beckford, the City patriot, who projected the *Monitor* in 1755. Most of

* Hone's "Table Book," vol. i. p. 61.

these were only essay-papers, treading, at a very respectful distance, in the footsteps of the *Tatler*, but a few copied it in publishing brief items of news. On the 6th November, 1756, the *Test* first appeared in opposition to Pitt; it was edited by Arthur Murphy, but only ran to the 9th of July, 1757, having had a formidable antagonist in the *Con-Test*, edited by "a poetic clergyman" named Francis.

It seems strange that men accustomed to reflection, exercising themselves in the daily study of mankind, and practised in the tracing of its actions to their motives and its feelings to their sources, should so often have been moved by surprise at the growth of an affection for news among the inhabitants of the most important city in the world. Strange would it have been, indeed, if, on the contrary, the citizens of London had exhibited an indifference to what was going on abroad, and an apathy to events which must influence their prosperity—strange if they, so jealous of their rights and privileges, should have turned a deaf ear to those who were the organs of asserting them—strange, too, surveying the subject from lower ground, if gossip, or even scandal, appealed to the attention of the town in vain. Yet we have found men at different periods of the growth of the newspaper press—shrewd, reflective, and thinking men—apparently staggered and puzzled by the phenomenon of its increase in numbers and importance. Ben Jonson, Burton, and Addison have all in turn been quoted as astonished at the "thirst for news," and, as late as 1758, we find Dr. Johnson still mentioning the fact with a tone of surprise:—

"No species of literary men has lately been so much multiplied as the writers of news. Not many years ago the nation was content with one *Gazette*, but now we have not only in the metropolis papers for every morning and every evening, but almost every large town has its weekly historian, who regularly circulates his periodical intelligence, and fills the villages of his district with conjectures on the

events of the war, and with debates on the true interests of Europe."* He accounts for it, somewhat clumsily we think, by the presumption that idleness finds an easy employment in the perusal of the papers—"reading without the fatigue of close attention;" and the world, therefore, swarms with writers, "whose wish is not to be studied, but to be read." If so, the state of things had very much and very rapidly changed, for we have all along heard of the earnestness with which men read the newspapers and entered into their arguments. The hot and angry politicians of the coffee-house, who were ready to support the views of their favourite writers either with tongue or sword; the tradesman, who ran out of the shop to get an early sight of the paper, and made himself master of geographical knowledge with great pains and labour, in order to follow the march of an army; the statesman, who thought it worth his while to scatter gold broad-cast among the newspaper writers, seem to tell a different tale. In a previous number† he had had his sneer at the newspaper writers, who, bad as they undoubtedly were at this time, seem to have been the pegs on which every satirist and writer hung his ridicule; but he grudgingly yields the admission that newspapers *may* be of service in the state:—"All foreigners remark that the knowledge of the common people of England is greater than that of any other vulgar. This superiority we undoubtedly owe to the rivulets of intelligence which are continually trickling among us, which every one may catch, and of which every one partakes." Still, he never has any enlarged foreshadowing of what newspapers may become or be made; it seems singularly to have escaped him that the press might in time obtain a leverage upon the nation's mind.

For this reason, possibly, he felt no pride in his own connexion with the press; in fact, it was a connexion not calculated to awaken agreeable feelings, for it was one of

* *Idler*, No. 30, November 11th, 1758. † Ibid. No. 7, May 27th, 1758.

necessity, not choice; and the series of papers which we have been quoting was itself written and sold to garnish a newspaper—appearing in the *Universal Chronicle, or Weekly Gazette,* a paper projected by Newberry, of St. Paul's Churchyard, in 1758, of which the "occurrences of the week were not sufficient to fill the columns."

In the previous year, too, he had written the preliminary discourse to the *London Chronicle,* of Dodsley, for the "humble reward" of a guinea.*

Boswell, in his list of the Doctor's writings, only mentions as casual newspaper contributions, one to the *Public Advertiser,* three to the *London Chronicle,* and three to the *Gazetteer,* but it is certain that he wrote more.

* Note by Murphy. (Works of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.)

CHAPTER XI.

JOHN ENTICK AND THE "MONITOR"—LORD BUTE SETS UP A PAPER—AND SMOLLETT EDITS IT—WHAT BECAME OF IT—THE "NORTH BRITON"—JOHN WILKES, CHURCHILL, AND LORD TEMPLE—THE DUELS, TRIALS, EXPULSION, OUTLAWRY, AND POPULARITY OF WILKES—GENERAL WARRANTS PROVE EXPENSIVE—THOMAS CHATTERTON AND HIS STRUGGLES ON THE PRESS—BINGLEY CONTINUES THE "NORTH BRITON."

GEORGE II. was gathered to his fathers, and a youthful monarch had succeeded to his throne; but the female favourites of the dead sensualist had not been half so obnoxious to the nation as the male favourite who was supposed to sway the young king. Lord Bute was covered with, perhaps, more than his fair share of obloquy: it was the will and pleasure of the people that he should be blamed for everything that went wrong, and receive credit for nothing that went right; it was their delight to hoot him, to insult him, to revile him, to caricature him, to burn him in effigy. A jack-boot was the emblem which, with bright humour, they chose to represent the favourite; and the jack-boot was always being kicked before King Mob, hung from a gibbet, roasted before a bonfire, or buried with all sorts of insult and contumely. In fact, it was a fashion of the people to *hate* Lord Bute. He was a favourite; and the people are always jealous and distrustful of favourites. He was a Scotchman; and the people just then held their noses that they might not *smell* a Scotchman. Add to this, then, that he was far from a good or efficient minister, and we may judge that Lord Bute scarcely had a friend but the king in England. A paper in which he was opposed most bitterly was the

Monitor, the principal writer of which was John Entick, or Entinck, the author of the School Dictionary which bears his name, a "History of London," a "History of the Seven Years' War," a Naval History, and other works to order of the booksellers. Entick was born in 1713; but it is uncertain where he was educated, and, although he styles himself "Reverend" and "M.A.," it is doubtful whether he ever got a degree. It is, however, certain that he had studied for the ministry. He wrote many of those publications which were then brought out in parts by the booksellers, and which, so dismembered, died; and he also kept a school at Stepney. "Soon after the beginning of the present reign," says Chalmers, "he commenced patriot of the school of Wilkes, wrote for some time in an anti-ministerial paper called the *Monitor*, and had, at length, the good fortune to be taken up upon a general warrant; for which he prosecuted the messenger, and got three hundred pounds damages."* In this paper he was associated with Dr. Shebbeare, and got two hundred a year for his work. In 1760 he married a widow lady of Stepney, who died a year after the marriage, but he survived her twelve years, dying in 1773, at the age of sixty, and was buried at Stepney.

In his extremity Bute conferred with Bubb Dodington; and it appeared the best course to start a newspaper, which should take up the cause of the unpopular minister, and try to write him into favour:—

"Lord Bute called on me, and we had much talk about setting up a paper."† The paper was "set up," and, on Saturday, May 29th, 1762, appeared the first number of *The Briton*, under the management of Dr. Tobias Smollett, and intended to silence the opposition *Monitor*. The choice of an editor was not a very judicious one. Smollett,

* Chalmers's "Biographical Dictionary," vol. xiii. pp. 214, 215.
† Diary of Bubb Dodington.

always of too irritable a temper for a journalist, was now declining in health and mental vigour. His previous political writings had been confined to the Tory and high-church *Critical Review*, which he started in 1756, and his editorship of which is made memorable by the brawls in which it involved him with his literary contemporaries, and the punishment which it brought down upon him for his libel on Admiral Knowles. The admiral's defence of his conduct in the secret expedition against Rochefort being under review, Smollett declared, "He is an admiral without conduct, an engineer without knowledge, an officer without resolution, and a man without veracity." The admiral resented this strong language by a prosecution of the printer, declaring that he only took this course in order to discover the author, of whom, if he were a gentleman, he should seek satisfaction of a different character. The decoy had its effect upon the high spirit of Smollett, who came forward and avowed himself the author; when the admiral coolly asked for judgment, which the court awarded him in damages of one hundred pounds, and three months' imprisonment,* which Smollett suffered in the latter part of 1759. His direction of the *Briton* was still less satisfactory. Almon, in his "Review of Lord Bute's Administration" (page 55), says of the *Briton*, "the number printed was but 250, which was as little as could be printed, with respect to the saving of expense," and Smollett's own friend Dr. Moore, in writing his life, regrets that he ever became a party writer, "by which he lost some of his old friends, and acquired but very cold-hearted new ones in their stead." Among the latter, Dr. Anderson's hints, in *his* Life of Smollett, clearly justify us in placing Lord Bute himself. Of the old friends whom he lost, one became his most formidable antagonist, and beat him so unmercifully in the literary contests, that the *Briton* retired in terrible disorder from the field, on the 12th of

* Scott's "Life of Smollett."

February, 1763, notwithstanding the efforts of the *Auditor*, a paper started by Arthur Murphy, 10th of June, 1762, to support it. The old friend who silenced Smollett (who could himself be bitter enough when he liked) was John Wilkes, Member of Parliament for Aylesbury, agitator and demagogue. The *Briton* had only been in existence a week, when the challenge was taken up by Wilkes, who, supported by Churchill and Lord Temple, lashed himself to his adversary and grappled him to death. Perhaps Smollett's greatest weakness lay less in his irritability, or his having an unpopular cause, than in his being a Scotchman. The *Critical Review*, although he was the only Scotchman engaged upon it,* was always attacked as a "Scots tribunal;" and now Wilkes made the most of the same line of attack, which was sure to be cheered to the echo by the public.†

But when the *Briton* was extinguished, Wilkes and his associates did not consider their task accomplished, and we now have to tell the story how this arch-agitator, this restless demagogue and reckless incendiary, came to be the instrument of good, to put a seal to the Bill of Rights and a rivet to the constitution of the country.

Bute had been compelled to withdraw, at all events ostensibly, from the government; but he was still suspected to be the puller of the strings which worked the puppets that succeeded him, especially Lords Sandwich and Le Despenser. This Wilkes boldly asserted, and, on Saturday, April 23d, 1763, in No. 45 of the *North Briton*, gave the lie to the royal speech. The government flew to arms, but, unfortunately, they took up an illegal weapon, issuing a general warrant, in which the officers were charged to "make search for the authors, printers, and publishers of a seditious and treasonable paper, entitled the *North Briton*,

* Roscoe's "Life of Smollett," prefixed to his collected works.

† Mr. Forster says the *Briton* was "written by Scotchmen."—*Sketch of Churchill.*

No. 45, Saturday, April 23d, 1763, printed by G. Kearsley, in Ludgate-street, London." Such was the dangerous and unconstitutional power put into the hands of three of the king's messengers, with instructions to do with it to the best of their discretion. On the strength of it, they at once arrested Balfe and Kearsley, the printer and publisher; and in the night of the 29th of April, entered the house of Wilkes, in Great George-street, Westminster, for the purpose of taking him into custody. He, however, at once took exception to their authority, protested against their intrusion at such an hour, and stood on the defensive; whereupon they withdrew, but returned in the morning, arrested him, and carried him before the secretary of state for examination, securing also all his letters and papers. His coadjutor Churchill had a narrow escape of sharing his fate. He came into the room at the moment, and Wilkes, knowing orders were out to arrest him also, and shrewdly suspecting the officers were unacquainted with his person, exclaimed, "Good morrow, Mr. Thomson! How does Mrs. Thomson do to-day? Does she dine *in the country?*" "Mr. Churchill," says Wilkes, who himself tells the story,* "thanked me, said she then waited for him, that he had only come for a moment to ask me how I did, and almost directly took his leave. He went home immediately, secured all his papers, and retired into the country. The messengers could never get intelligence where he was." After his examination, Wilkes was committed to the Tower, and his friends and legal advisers were refused access to him. The warrant which thus committed him so close a prisoner describes the *North Briton* as "a most infamous and seditious libel, tending to inflame the minds and alienate the affections of the people from his majesty, and to excite them to traitorous insurrections against the government." On May 3d (never yet having

* A Complete Collection of the Genuine Papers and Letters in the Case of John Wilkes. (Paris, 1767.)

been allowed to see either his friends or solicitors) he was brought up on a writ of *habeas corpus* to the Court of Common Pleas, and his case argued by Serjeant Glyn, his counsel, who, of course, was instructed only by his friends (for it is worthy of remark that he could not get it admitted that the secretaries of state had given direct instructions that no one should see him, only that they had "gone out of town, and left no orders;" this pitiful subterfuge throwing the onus on the constable of the Tower, who was, of course, instructed privately). He himself made a speech, in which he protested loyalty to the king and opposition to the ministers; and ultimately the court offered him his liberty on bail. This he very properly refused (wishing to test the legality of the power by which he was arrested), and was remanded back to the Tower, his friends now, for the first time, being admitted to him. The next day he was, by order of the king, peremptorily dismissed from the colonelcy of the Buckinghamshire Militia. On the 6th he was again brought up, and addressed the court, expressing a conviction that it would order his release, and, if it did not, his confidence in an appeal to a jury. His counsel then raised and argued the following points: whether the warrant of commitment was legal—whether the particular passages of the libel ought not to have been specified—and whether his privilege as a member of parliament did not exempt him from arrest. Lord Chief Justice Pratt ruled against him on the first two points, and in his favour on the third, and he was discharged from custody on his privilege. He again addressed the court, thanking them for their decision, and retired among shouts of rejoicing from a "prodigious mob," who accompanied him to his own house. Here he found that his papers had been seized and removed, and he forthwith wrote a letter (scarcely justified even by the circumstances) to Lords Egremont and Halifax, accusing them of having robbed his house in his absence, and being in possession of the

"stolen goods."* In reply, those noblemen reproved him for his insolent language, and informed him that, although he was discharged from custody, his majesty had ordered the attorney-general to prosecute him, and for that purpose some portion of his papers were detained. No proceedings were, however, taken at present, and on the 30th of May he set up a press under his own direction, and recommenced the *North Briton*. His violence and abusive personalities involved him in some strange scrapes. On the 8th of October, 1762, Lord Talbot had challenged and fought him at Bagshot, and the *North Briton* came off with the advantage; but now he had outraged the whole Scottish nation, and was strangely called to account for it. Having thought it prudent to retire to Paris, he was, on the 15th of August, walking with a friend, when he was accosted by a gentleman, who asked him if his name was Wilkes. On being answered in the affirmative, "he said that Mr. Wilkes wrote the *North Briton*, and he must fight him." This Scottish knight-errant was Captain Forbes, who gives us the whole story in a letter to his father. "I let him know," he says, "that I was a Scotch gentleman, and that, upon account of the scurrilous and ignominious things he had wrote against my country, I was determined he should fight me." Wilkes replies, with some show of reason, that he was not bound to fight every Scotchman who might choose to vindicate his country, adding that he was waiting to fight Lord Egremont, and until he had met him he would engage no one. Whereupon Forbes exclaims, "The first time ever I shall meet you in the streets or elsewhere, I will give you an hundred strokes of a stick, as you deserve no more to be used like a gentleman, but as an eternal rascal and scoundrel." The marshals of France (at whose instigation we are not told) now interfered; but some time afterwards, Wilkes, failing in meeting Lord Egremont, sent notice to the chivalrous Scot, through his friend the

* Authentic Account of the Proceedings against John Wilkes.

Honourable Alexander Murray, that he would meet him at Menin, in Austrian Flanders, whither he repaired with his second, but Forbes made no appearance.

On the 8th of November, the Houses, both of Lords and Commons, went up to the king with an address, expressing their abhorrence of the *North Briton*, and soliciting that steps might be taken for its suppression; and shortly afterwards suicidally resolved that the privilege of parliament did not exempt persons from arrest for libel.* On the 15th, the House of Commons, on the motion of Lord North, voted "that the *North Briton*, No. 45, is a false, scandalous, and seditious libel, containing expressions of the most unexampled insolence and contumely towards his majesty, the grossest aspersions against both Houses of Parliament, and the most audacious defiance of the authority of the whole legislature; and most manifestly tending to alienate the affections of the people from his majesty, to withdraw them from their obedience to the laws of the realm, and to excite them to traitorous insurrection against his majesty's government."† The House further resolved that the obnoxious paper should be burned by the hands of the common hangman, and this was done on the following day, in front of the Royal Exchange,‡ when a great mob assembled and pelted the executioner and constables with filth, broke the windows of the sheriffs' carriage, and were proceeding to further acts of violence, when the authorities decamped and left King Mob marching up Cheapside with the rescued remains of the *North Briton* borne high in triumph. At Temple Bar a huge fire was raised, and the eternal jack-boot consigned to the flames. This indignity to the House was resented by an address to the king, praying for the punishment of the offenders; but a motion in the Court of Common Council, for a vote of

* Proceedings of the House of Lords, November 29th, 1763.

† Journals of the House of Commons, vol. xxix. p. 723.

‡ Not in Cheapside, as stated by Mr. Knight Hunt.

thanks to the sheriffs for their attempts to carry the order into effect, was negatived.

The debate in the Commons produced another duel. Mr. Samuel Martin, late secretary to the Treasury, complained that he "had been stabbed in the dark by the *North Briton*," and would like to know his antagonist. The next day Wilkes wrote to acknowledge himself the author of the attacks complained of, and we give a portion of Mr. Martin's reply, as a curious example of the style of such epistles between two members of parliament in the year 1763 :—

"Sir,—As I said in the House of Commons yesterday, the writer of the *North Briton*, who had stabbed me in the dark, was a cowardly as well as a malignant and infamous scoundrel, and your letter of this morning's date acknowledges that every passage of the *North Briton* in which I have been named, or even alluded to, was written by yourself, I must take the liberty to repeat that you are a malignant and infamous scoundrel, and that I desire to give you an opportunity of showing me whether the epithet of cowardly was rightly applied or not. I desire you may meet me in Hyde Park immediately, with a brace of pistols each, to determine our difference," * &c. &c.

The desired meeting was granted, and Wilkes fell, shot in the belly. He appears to have acted with some magnanimity on this occasion, entreating Martin to save himself, refusing afterwards to criminate him, and charging his friends, in the event of his death, to take no proceedings against his adversary. But the wound did not kill him; neither did Alexander Dun, the Scotchman who forced his way into his house during his illness and attempted to assassinate him; he was spared to perform the only act that gives a lustre to his name, and we are not sure, even in that, whether the motives that guided him were purely patriotic.

* A Complete Collection of the Letters and Papers in the Case of John Wilkes, p. 55.

On the 6th of December an action was tried by a special jury (at the desire of the defendant), in the Court of Common Pleas, in which John Wilkes claimed damages of Robert Wood, the Under-Secretary of State, for the seizure of his papers on the 23d of April. It was on this occasion that Lord Chief Justice Pratt gave his celebrated decision against general warrants, and not, as has been generally stated, on the 4th of May, the question of the warrant of arrest not having been brought forward on that day. In a long and remarkable speech, Pratt declares the general warrant to have been "unconstitutional, illegal, and absolutely void." The jury found a verdict for the plaintiff, with 1,000*l.* damages. And on the 21st of February, 1764, the City of London presented the judge with its freedom, as a mark of its admiration of his conduct. Thus did the restless demagogue and factious politician secure the liberty of our persons and the sanctity of our homes against one of the most daring attempts ever made upon both. The story now falls off in importance: Wilkes has done "the deed which gilds his humble name," and the rest is little more than the tinsel of mob popularity. On the 19th of January, 1764, he was expelled the House of Commons for writing the *North Briton*, and on the 21st of February he was tried before Lord Mansfield, in the Court of King's Bench, for republishing the *North Briton*, No. 45, and also for printing an infamous and obscene "Essay on Woman," and found guilty of both charges. Refusing to surrender for judgment, he was outlawed. "On Sunday, August 5th, 1764, the under-sheriff of Middlesex made proclamation at the great door of St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, in the following terms: 'John Wilkes, late of the parish of Saint Margaret, within the liberty of Westminster, in the county of Middlesex, Esq., appear before the lord the king at Westminster, on Tuesday next, after the morrow of All Souls, to satisfy the lord the king for your redemption on account of certain

trespasses, contempts, and misdemeanours, whereof you are impeached, and thereupon by a certain jury of the county, taken before the king, and you, the said John Wilkes, you are convicted.'"* 'But Wilkes, preferring his liberty to his "redemption," retired to the Continent, from whence, on the 4th of March, 1768, he addressed a submissive letter to the king, soliciting a pardon; but this having no effect, he shortly afterwards surrendered, and was subsequently sentenced to pay a fine of 500*l.*, and suffer twelve months' imprisonment, for republishing the *North Briton*. On the 28th of March he was returned as one of the members for Middlesex, and on the 7th of May his outlawry was considered, and in next term reversed, by the Court of King's Bench, as illegal, Serjeant Glyn gaining this point against Thurlow. On the 28th of November he petitioned the king, through Sir Joseph Mawbey, for a pardon; on the 2d of January, 1769, he was elected alderman for the ward of Farringdon Without; on the 1st of February his petition to the House of Commons for a restitution of his seat was declared frivolous, and he was formally expelled the House, and a writ issued for a new election. On the day of election he was returned without opposition, but voted by the House (February 29th) unable to take his seat. A new election, on March 16th, saw him again elected, and next day again expelled the House. On April 13th he was for the fourth time returned by a large majority, but this time the election was declared null and void, and his opponent, Colonel Luttrell, pronounced duly elected. The Supporters of the Bill of Rights sent him 300*l.*, and on April 20th he paid his first fine, and on the 17th of April, 1770, he was discharged from his imprisonment. On November the 11th, 1769, he clenched the question of the general warrants by an action against Lord Halifax for false imprisonment and the seizure of his papers, and got 4,000*l.* damages. We have no more to say

* Annual Register, 1764.

of the *North Briton;* of its author we may just remind the reader that he was subsequently elected sheriff, lord mayor, and chamberlain of the City of London, and member for the county of Middlesex, dying December 26th, 1792, at the age of seventy, and his remains being deposited, by his own request, in a vault of Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley-street. He left behind him, among all the stormy recollections which his name suggests, some quiet proofs of a classic and refined taste in literature; but his translations of Theophrastus, Catullus, and Anacreon are trampled down by the boisterous *North Briton,* which still represents him. A few articles which he contributed to the *St. James's Chronicle* in 1761, appear to have been the commencement of that connexion with the newspaper press which led to so important an era in his history.

Horace Walpole relates a pillory scene in connexion with the *North Briton,* in which the celebrated jack-boot appears again in a prominent position:—

"Williams, the reprinter of the *North Briton,* stood in the pillory to-day (February 14th, 1765) in Palace-yard. He went in a hackney-coach, the number of which was 45. The mob erected a gallows opposite him, on which they hung a boot with a bonnet of straw. Then a collection was made for Williams, which amounted to nearly 200*l.*" The money was placed in a blue purse trimmed with orange, the colour of the Revolution.* To this account we may add, in proof of the extravagance of public feeling, that the owner of the hackney-coach considered the honour of carrying Williams sufficient reward, and refused the proffered fare: that one gentleman put fifty guineas into the purse: that "opposite to the pillory were erected four ladders, with cords running from one to another, on which were hung a boot-jack, an axe, and a bonnet, the latter labelled, 'Scotch Bonnet:'" that the top of the boot being first chopped off with the axe, it

* Fourth Estate, vol. i. p. 212.

and the bonnet were together burned: and that Williams stood the whole time with a sprig of laurel in his hand.

Churchill, although his character would have seemed just to suit him for such work as the *North Briton*, seldom appears prominently,* although it was said by Kearsley, in his examination, that he received the profits arising from the sale of the paper. If so, Wilkes must have been satisfied with the notoriety which it brought him, and which appears to have been particularly acceptable to his temperament.

The ruling of Chief Justice Pratt (now better known as Lord Camden) produced, as may well be imagined, a goodly crop of actions at law. On December 10th, 1763, Dryden Leach, printer, had obtained 300*l.* damages from the three king's messengers who had arrested him by mistake as the printer of the *North Briton;* and, on the 4th, Arthur Beardmore, who, with Dr. Shebbeare and Entick as authors of the *Monitor*, and Fell and Wilson as its printers, had been arrested on a general-warrant, brought an action against Lord Halifax, and recovered 1,500*l.*; Entick got 20*l.*; Meredith, clerk to Beardmore, 200*l.*; Fell, 18*l.*; and Wilson, 40*l.* On May 4th, 1764, Beardmore got further damages of 1,000*l.* from the messengers who arrested him; and on June 1st, Fell and Wilson got 600*l.*; so that Halifax, who had to bear the whole brunt of the actions (the other Secretary of State who had signed the warrants, Lord Egremont, being dead), found general warrants rather costly, as well as dangerous playthings.

The constitutional course of an appeal to "twelve honest men" was found to be the safest after all; and when it seemed necessary to restrain the press, the government were content to abide the decision of a jury. The only prosecution, however, that we have met with about

* Mr. Tooke, in his "Life of Churchill," only identifies two or three papers as of the poet's writing.

this time, was that of Richard Nutt, the printer of the *London Evening Post*, who was tried for libel (and that, by-the-bye, before the prosecution of Wilkes), September 10th, 1754.

Wilkes's fascinating manners (for Lord Mansfield, who hated him for his attacks on the Scotch, and high Tory Dr. Johnson, who, although he might have sympathised with him in this sentiment, must have hated his Whig principles, have both admitted that his manners were both gentlemanly and fascinating) attracted the friendship of another poet besides Churchill, and Thomas Chatterton, sick of all he knew of the aristocracy in Horace Walpole, allied himself to democracy and Wilkes. What papers he actually wrote we cannot now discover; we know him better as a writer for the *Middlesex Journal*. In October, 1768, then only fifteen years of age, this precocious genius had contributed some articles to *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, and early in 1770, he commenced writing in the *Middlesex Journal*, under the signature of "Decimus," in the *Political Register* under that of "Probus," and in the *Freeholder's Magazine*, with the initials "T. C." In one of those letters to his mother, which have been so often adduced as evidence of his vanity, if not of a love of lying, but which, we think, bear touching testimony of a desire to make his loved relations happy in visions of future fame and glory, never, alas! to be realized,—breathing words of hope and comfort from the bosom that was sighing with disappointment and despair, and accompanied with presents from the hand that had not bread to put to his mouth, the hapless lad writes, under date of "Shoreditch, May 6th, 1770"—"Occasional essays for the daily papers would more than support me." But what a different tale does his own private entries in his pocket-book tell! The youth, who wrote so fondly to his proud mother and sister of the position he was gaining, and the affluence he had in store for them and would share with them,

sealed his letter, and, sick at heart, entered the miserable pittances he was receiving from the papers: —

		£	s.	d.
Rec^{d}.	To May 23d, of Mr. Hamilton, for Middlesex (Journal).	1	11	8
	To ditto, for Candidus and Foreign Journal	0	2	0
	Middlesex Journal	0	8	6

The fond sister who read, "I am very intimately acquainted with the editor of the *Political Register*, who is also editor of another publication," little thought upon what a footing! A shade of doubt might have come across her as she read, further on: "The printers of the daily publications are all frightened out of their patriotism, and will take nothing unless it is moderate or ministerial. I have not had five patriotic essays this fortnight, all must be ministerial or entertaining." Did the suspicion for a moment cross her mind that the proud spirit was so bent that he was now writing on both sides for the sake of bread? Did she see the thunder-cloud gathering that was to burst in a deluge of tears, and put out the shining hopes of the doting mother and loving sister?

The dazzle of the illuminations and bonfires which blazed in honour of every triumph of Wilkes, fascinated poor William Bingley, the bookseller of the Strand, who, on May 10th, 1768, brought out No. 47 of the *North Briton*, and got committed to Newgate on an attachment on July 1st. Chatterton had at the last looked forward with hope to being made a martyr, but no such fortune fell to his lot; Bingley really got a grievance, but did not make skilful use of it. On November 7th he was committed to the King's Bench for not giving bail to answer interrogatories, and was thus kept in gaol for two years. Destitute of the tact and the talent of Wilkes, he continued the *North Briton* to No. 217 (May 11th, 1771), when he incorporated it with *Bingley's Journal*, which he had started in 1770. He was a mere tool in the hands of his party, and one day found himself in the

Bankruptcy Court, discarded by those to whom he was no longer of any use.

In Trinity Term, 1761, a case was tried in the Court of King's Bench, "Rex *v.* Kinnersley," in which the printer of *Lloyd's Evening Post* was criminally indicted for stating that Lord Clanricarde had married an actress in Dublin, his wife being then alive. The defence was, that his Lordship was wrongly described, not being a peer of Great Britain; and, secondly, that the defendant had made a full recantation in the next day's paper: but both pleas were overruled, and he was found guilty.*

* Modern Reports, vol. xii. p. 226.

CHAPTER XII.

ARTHUR MURPHY—BEARDMORE, ENTICK AND SHEBBEARE—HUGH KELLY AND THOMAS HOLCROFT—DR. JACKSON—JUNIUS—WHO HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE, AND WHO HE WAS NOT—WOODFALL AND THE "PUBLIC ADVERTISER"—WILLIAM COOKE AND THE "GENERAL ADVERTISER"—TRIAL OF ALMON—EXPENSES OF A DAILY PAPER IN 1774—THE THEATRE AND THE PRESS—FIRST DRAMATIC CRITICISM—WILLIAM WOODFALL AND THE "MORNING CHRONICLE"—GOLDSMITH AND THE "PUBLIC LEDGER"—PARLIAMENT AGAIN ATTACKS THE PRESS—AND GETS THOROUGHLY BEATEN—BRASS CROSBY AND THE ALDERMEN FIGHT ITS BATTLE—THEIR TRIUMPH.

THE writers for the ministry, after all, got the best of it as far as substantial reward goes. Arthur Murphy, of Cork, disliking his occupation as a merchant, unsuccessful as a player, an almost briefless barrister, and a political writer of little depth (although more successful as a dramatist and biographer), was rewarded for his *Auditor* and *Test* by the post of commissioner of bankrupts, and died in 1805 in the enjoyment of a pension of 200*l.* a-year.

Dr. Philip Francis, a native of Ireland, son of a dean, and father of Sir Philip Francis, also got preferment through his connexion with the press. The translator of Horace and Demosthenes, and author of two tragedies, got only the living of Barrow in Suffolk, but the writer of newspaper articles, whilom the author of the *Con-Test*, was rewarded with the patronage of Lord Holland, the chaplaincy of Chelsea Hospital, and, still more important, that interest which started his son on the road to fame. Dr. Francis died at Bath in 1773.

How the opposing writers Beardmore and Entick fared we

are not clearly informed; at all events, if they did not get pensions, we do not know that they got the pillory; but Dr. Shebbeare got both; and in 1759 was pilloried for his Seventh Letter to the People of England; and in the following reign pensioned for his advocacy of the government side in the War of Independence. Singularly enough, Beardmore, with whom he was afterwards associated,* was at that time under-sheriff, and carried out the sentence in so mild a manner (allowing, it is said, a man in livery to hold an umbrella over the doctor's head), that he was fined 50*l.* for contempt. This versatile writer (the "Ferret" of Smollett's "Sir Launcelot Greaves") was born at Bideford in 1709, and carried on business at Bristol as an apothecary, which he abandoned in 1740 and came to London. Thence, being a sympathiser with the Stuarts, he made his way to Paris, and returned, with his doctor's degree, a member of the Academy of Sciences. He wrote three or four novels, a "Practice of Physic," "Letters on the English Nation," in two volumes, and political articles on both sides, and died in the sunshine of ministerial favour in 1788.

David Malloch, a Scotchman, educated first at Aberdeen, and afterwards at Edinburgh, and subsequently, by recommendation of the professors, tutor to the sons of the Duke of Montrose, came to London, changed his name to Mallet, and set up as journalist. His enemies

* Mr. Knight Hunt says they "differed totally in politics;" but the sworn information of J. Scott, on the trial of Entick *v.* Carrington, tells us differently, and gives us the early history of the *Monitor:* "In the year 1765, I proposed setting up a paper, and mentioned it to Dr. Shebbeare, and, in a few days, one Arthur Beardmore, an attorney-at-law, sent for me, hearing of my intention, and desired that I would mention to Dr. Shebbeare that he, Beardmore, and some others of his friends, had an intention of setting up a paper in the City. Shebbeare met Beardmore and myself and Entick at the Horn Tavern, and agreed upon the setting up of the paper by the name of the *Monitor*, and that Dr. Shebbeare and Mr. Entick should have 200*l.* a-year each."

asserted that his father kept a public-house at Crieff, in the county of Perth, and that his name had been McGregor; but that on the name of that clan being proscribed, he took the not very euphonius one of Malloch, which was good enough for the son till he got introduced into fashionable circles of London. It is also said that Mallet was hired by Bolingbroke to blacken the character of Pope, who had been his friend; and by the government, on a later occasion, to write down the unfortunate Admiral Byng. There is no doubt he was a professed deist. He wrote several tragedies, and a stupid life of Bacon, and did *not* write a life of Marlborough, which old Duchess Sarah had employed him to arrange; but he enjoyed the friendship of Swift, Pope, and Bolingbroke, and the confidence of Frederick, Prince of Wales, whom he served as under-secretary. He was afterwards associated with Thomson in composing the masque of "Alfred" for the Prince's entertainment, and entrusted by Lord Bolingbroke with the publication of his posthumous works, which brought down on him much obloquy. He died 21st April, 1665, in his sixty-sixth year, having been twice married.

The eccentric Philip Thicknesse, under the encouragement of Lord Camden, purchased a share in the *Middlesex Journal*, in order that he might write more bitterly against the government than he could without being a proprietor.

Hugh Kelly, an Irish gentleman by birth, a staymaker by trade, an attorney's scribe by necessity, and a dramatic writer by choice, wrote a series of essays entitled "The Babbler," in Owen's *Weekly Chronicle*, from 1763 to 1766, and contributed to the *Public Ledger*, the *Royal Chronicle*, &c. He wrote also a tragedy, several comedies, and a novel, and died in 1777. Taylor, the author of "Monsieur Tonson," gives a curious account of the vicissitudes of Kelly's career. He had heard that Hugh was

in his youth potboy at a public-house in Dublin, which was the resort of second-rate actors. Displaying literary tastes he got access to a newspaper, and, by this means, frequently obtained orders for the theatres; and his criticisms of the performances drew upon him the notice of the actors, who took him by the hand and apprenticed him to a staymaker. At the expiration of his term, he came to London, formed a connexion with the papers, and ultimately edited the *Public Ledger*. He then turned to the law, and was duly called to the bar: and, whilst awaiting the influx of briefs, employed himself in writing for the stage. His prospects at the bar were brightening, when an abscess in the side carried him off in the thirty-eighth year of his age. Taylor adds that the government conferred upon him a pension of 200*l.* a-year in reward of his political writings, and that his widow enjoyed a moiety of it up till the time of her death in 1826.*

About the same time, Thomas Holcroft, the dramatist, contributed a series of essays to the *Whitehall Evening Post*, which paid him at the liberal rate of 5*s.* per column for them.

Of the lower order and meaner fry of newspaper writers was Dr. William Jackson, a native of Ireland, who is said to have been clerk at a Moravian meeting-house in the Old Jewry and a prime adviser of the Duchess of Kingston. He had entered at Oxford, and was one time curate of St. Mary-le-Strand, but never got a benefice. He is described as "part editor" of the *Public Ledger;* but whatever was the exact nature of his connexion with the papers, it reflects no credit on them. We believe he edited the *Morning Post* during the Westminster Election Scrutiny. He also contributed to the *Whitehall Evening Post*, and was the author of the letters in the *Public Ledger*, signed "Curtius." He was one of the promoters of the infamous

* Records of my Life, vol. i. pp. 95—97.

charge against Foote, and, falling into merited contempt and indigence, went to Ireland, took part in the rebellion of 1797, was arrested and sentenced to death; but he cheated the executioner by poisoning himself.

In the list of newspapers flourishing between the years 1755 and 1760, we again find some whimsical titles, such as the *Devil, Man,* the *Old Maid* (1755); the *Humanist,* the *Prater* (1756); the *Crab Tree* (1757); and the *Busy Body* (1759).

And now another storm is brewing in the newspaper world, and the mysterious hand which is to raise it pens his first letter to the *Public Advertiser* on the 28th of April, 1767, and signs it "JUNIUS." And this is most probably the only name by which we shall ever know that powerful writer, who shook the throne, defied the parliament, and laughed at the courts of law;* on whose identity hundreds of pamphlets have been written, and written in vain, and who has been a doubt, a mystery, and a contention among speculatists and conjecturers for very nearly a century.

The literary world is subject to intermittent and epidemic fits of speculative inquiry. Thus, in the present day, a question has been raised whether Shakspeare or Bacon wrote the plays which the former has all along had credit for, and whether Sir Walter Scott or his brother, or both together, wrote the Waverley Novels. Literary archæologists seize upon the bone of contention, and nibble and pick away, but get little off it; but the bone which Junius left them to pick has been thoroughly

* "He made you," cried Burke to the House of Commons, in the Debate of November 27th, 1770, on the power of the attorney-general to file *ex officio* informations—"he made you his quarry, and you still bleed from the wounds of his talons. You crouched, and still crouch, beneath his rage. Nor" (to the Speaker) "has he dreaded the terrors of your brow, sir; he has attacked even you—he has—and I believe you have no reason to triumph in the encounter, ... King, Lords, and Commons are but the sport of his fury!"—*Parliamentary Debates,* vol. xvii.

gnawed by three generations. At the time when the "Letters" appeared, pamphlets abounded, fixing their authorship, to the perfect satisfaction of each pamphleteer, upon every public man; the *Gentleman's Magazine* opened its columns to suggestions and was filled with them; in 1824, the *Monthly Magazine* renewed the subject; in 1837 pamphlets again appeared, with fresh lights, which flickered and went out; and lately, *Notes and Queries* has worked like a mole on the subject; but they have all been gropings in the dark. We believe the "Letters" have been fathered, with a greater or a lesser degree of confidence, upon upwards of forty public characters. The most favoured were Sir Philip Francis, Lord Lyttleton, Colonel Barré, Burke, J. Dunning (afterwards Lord Ashburton), Chatham, Dr. Wilmott, Hugh Boyd, Wilkes, Horne Tooke, Lord George Sackville, Governor Pownall, Sir G. Jackson, Maclean, and Dr. Sidney Swinney. The wildest conjectures have gained believers, and there have been madmen to lay them to George III., a Captain Allen, Suett the comedian, Combe (the author of "Dr. Syntax"), Bickerton, an eccentric Oxonian, and an utterly unknown Mr. Jones. Who this famous writer was, will be a question asked by generations to follow us: what he was, his own writings must tell us. Violent and personal he no doubt was; but then all newspaper writers were violent and personal; we must all admit that he started from the earth ever and anon to stand in the way of encroachments upon the constitution—that he, by some mysterious means, knew and frustrated projected jobs—that he drove back trespassing footsteps, and drew his pen in defence of rights which were in danger of being trampled down. But more than this he did not choose that we should know; his vizor was impenetrable—he was more than the Iron Mask of political literature. Of all newspaper writings his were the most popular; they have become standard; they are quoted as authorities on matters political; they have passed through

numerous editions from the "original Woodfall" to the recent Bohn; yet no love of admiration or of fame, no desire of applause, no vanity, could tempt him to throw off his disguise. We do not believe that so bold a spirit felt the smallest fear of a prosecution; but, even if he had, the time when it was to be dreaded passed by, and yet Junius was wrapped in his impenetrable cloak. Woodfall, if he ever knew the secret, was faithful to his confidence: he only shook his head and shrugged his shoulders in reply to searching inquirers. The letters "were delivered by an unknown hand," or "were dropped into his letter-box:" they could get no more out of him.

The first of these celebrated Letters appeared in the *Public Advertiser* of April 28th, 1767—the last on January 21st, 1772, sixty-nine Letters having appeared in this interval. It has been the custom to represent that they were received with a *furore* that made the instant fortune of the paper in which they appeared. A correspondent in the *Athenæum* of July, 1838, and July, 1839,* was the first to correct this delusion by a reference to the accounts of the *Public Advertiser* still preserved in the family of its proprietor. The circulation appears to have been uninfluenced until the famous Letter to the King appeared on February 7th, 1770; then 1,750 additional copies were printed. Next week the Letter to the Duke of Grafton produced a sale of 700 above the usual number; the Letter of the 19th March, 350; April, 350; 28th May, no additional copies; 22d August (Letter to Lord North), 100; (Letter to Lord Mansfield), 600; April, 1771, 500; June (Letter to the Duke of Grafton), 100; July (ditto), 250; 24th July (Letter to Horne Tooke), none; August (ditto), 200; September (Letter to the Duke of Grafton), 250; same month (Letter to the Livery of London), the sale fell 250 below the usual demand; 5th October, the usual

* Nos. 1,083, 1,085, and 1,132

number; 28th November (to the Duke of Grafton), 350 additional.

Junius also wrote occasionally under the signatures of Atticus, Lucius, and Philo-Junius. The latter name he adopted in replying to the Letters on the Impressing of Seamen, which appeared in the *Public Advertiser*, signed by "An Advocate of the Cause of the People," but which were written by John Hope, the author of "Thoughts in Prose and Verse," and other works, who was member of parliament for Linlithgow in 1768, on the nomination of his kinsman the Earl of Hopetown, but lost his seat and an allowance of 200*l.* a-year, by giving offence to the earl in his vote on the expulsion of Wilkes.

Numerous were the disputants who, emulating the fame of Junius, now rushed into the lists with high-sounding Roman names. Marcus Antonius, Scipio, Brutus, Cato, Valerius, Virginius, played the buffoon in the *Evening Post*, and thought they were dividing the laurels with the great Gladiator of the *Public Advertiser;* but they were Romans only in name—Grub-street claimed them for its own. Crabbe has had his laugh at them in his poem of "The Newspaper":—

> "These Roman souls, like Rome's great sons, are known
> To live in cells on labours of their own;
> Thus Milo, could we see the noble chief,
> Feeds, for his country's good, on legs of beef;
> Camillus copies deeds for sordid pay,
> Yet fights the public battles twice a day!
> E'en now, the god-like Brutus views his score
> Scroll'd on the bar board, swinging with the door;
> Where, tippling punch, grave Cato's self you'll see
> And Amor Patriæ vending smuggled tea."

And more recently, De Quincey's pen has ridiculed these pen-and-ink patriots with the high-sounding names:—"A 'Junius Brutus' that dares not sign by his own honest name, is presumably skulking from his creditors. A 'Timoleon,' who hints at assassination in a newspaper, one

may take it for granted is a manufacturer of begging-letters; and it is a conceivable case that a twenty-pound note, enclosed to 'Timoleon's' address through the newspaper office, might go far to soothe that great patriot's feelings, and even to turn aside his avenging dagger."*

Balked in their efforts to lift the veil of Junius, the inquirers into his identity have pryed into every secret of his publisher and of the paper for which he wrote. On March 4th, 1736, they have discovered that Henry Sampson Woodfall purchased "one-third of a tenth" of the *London Daily Post*, of Theophilus Cibber, for the consideration of twenty-eight pounds. In March, 1743-44, the *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* dropped its first title, and in 1752 became the *Public Advertiser*. In 1766, another *General Advertiser* had sprung into existence, and was edited by William Cooke, the author of Memoirs of Macklin and of Foote. He was educated at the Grammar School of Cork, and engaged himself as a private tutor, but, coming to London, entered himself at the Temple, and was called to the bar in 1766; and afterwards, taking for his second wife the widow of Major Gammage, commander of Trichinopoly, inherited at her death a handsome fortune. But this was not Woodfall's paper; neither must it be confounded with the *Daily Advertiser*, founded by Jenour, and of which we are told the shares were sold "like freehold lands by public auction, fetching great prices."† The property of the *Public Advertiser* was held in shares, for David Garrick was a shareholder, but the manager and publisher was Henry Sampson Woodfall. Woodfall has often had credit for suffering imprisonment rather than give up his author; but this is a mistake. Woodfall, although prosecuted, was not imprisoned at all, but got what was tantamount to a verdict of acquittal. The only man who really suffered for the publication of

* Note-Book of an English Opium-Eater.

† Fourth Estate, vol. ii. p. 91.

the Letters appears to have had the least to do with it. The prosecution of John Almon for publishing Junius's Letter to the King exhibits a feeling of vindictiveness on the part of the government too openly displayed to be doubted, even had it not been satisfactorily accounted for. Almon, a bookseller of Piccadilly, and publisher of the *Political Register*, by some means came into possession of, and published, a plan which had been sketched by the king's own hand for increasing the army in Ireland. As soon as it was seen, a Mr. Barnard, jun. was despatched to Almon, to demand of him how he became possessed of the manuscript. This he refused to divulge; and, on the return of his messenger without the information he had been sent for, the king was very indignant, and declared that the contumacious bookseller should suffer for it. The attorney-general laid informations against John Almon for reprinting, publishing, and uttering the Letter to the King in one of his publications called the *London Museum;* Henry Woodfall for printing the same in the *Public Advertiser;* John Millar for reprinting it in the *London Evening Post;* Charles Say, in the *Gazetteer;* George Robinson, in the *Independent Chronicle;* and Henry Baldwin, in the *St. James's Chronicle.* Of these Almon was picked out to be the first victim; and on June 2, 1770 (before the trial of Woodfall, the original printer and publisher), was tried in the King's Bench, Westminster, by a special jury, before Lord Mansfield. Serjeant Glyn was the counsel for the defence. Two witnesses were examined, who described themselves as "messengers of the press;" and, on being questioned, gave the singular explanation that they were employed by government at a salary to purchase all papers "when anything particular was advertised in them." The jury was a packed one; several servants of the king's household and clerks in government offices were on it, and when Almon objected to them as not being sufficiently impartial, his objections were sternly overruled; and, as if it

were thought even not worth concealing the *animus* of the whole affair, Leonard Morse, Esq., a clerk in the war office, was appointed foreman. Such a jury, of course, returned a verdict of guilty, and the offending printer was sentenced to pay a fine of ten marks (6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*) and costs (139*l.* 0*s.* 11*d.*), and to find bail, himself in 400*l.* and two sureties in 200*l.* each. On June 13, 1770, Woodfall's trial came on, also before Lord Mansfield, but the jury found him guilty of printing and publishing only, which amounted to an acquittal; and on July 13, Millar and Baldwin were tried and acquitted. Thus the law, as expounded by these intelligent juries, directed by one of our greatest judges, declared that it is criminal in one man to reprint what it is not criminal in another to be the original publisher of; and that the act of A. may be illegal, and the very same act by B. legal! Well, Mr. Almon should have given a civil answer to Mr. Barnard, junior.

The expenses of getting up the *Public Advertiser* have been copied from the ledger of Henry Woodfall, and afford us a curious view of the way in which a newspaper of that time was manufactured:—

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Paid translating foreign news, &c.	100	0	0
Foreign newspapers	14	0	0
Foy, at 2*s.* per day	31	4	0
Lloyd's Coffee-house, for post news	12	0	0
Home news, &c., as per receipts and incidents	282	4	11½
List of sheriffs	0	10	6
Plantation, Irish, Scotch, and country news	50	0	0
Portsmouth letter	8	5	0
Stocks	3	3	0
Sessions news, amongst news collectors	0	0	0
Incidents, included amongst home news	0	0	0
Porterage to Stamp-office	10	8	0
Recorder's clerk	1	1	0
Sir John Fielding	50	0	0
Delivering papers, fifty-two weeks, at 1*l.* 4*s.* per week	62	8	0
Carried forward	625	4	5¼

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	625	4	5½
Clerk, and to collect debts	30	0	0
Setting up extra advertisements	31	10	0
A person to go daily, to fetch in advertisements, get evening papers, &c.	15	15	0
Morning and evening papers	26	8	9½
Postage to and from correspondents	10	10	0
Price of hay and straw, Whitechapel	1	6	0
Mr. Green, for port entries	31	10	0
Law charges, Mr. Holloway	6	7	5
Bad debts	18	3	6
	£796	15	2

Among the shareholders of the paper at this time were Thomas Longman, Thomas Cadell, and William Strahan, owners of one-twentieth each, and H. S. Woodfall, James Dodsley, and John Rivington (all booksellers), two-twentieths each; and they received 80*l.* per share profit. With a sale of 3,000 a-day, the total profits were 1,740*l.*, of which the advertisements paid about 50*l.*, but in that year (1774) there are such expressive entries as—

	£	s.	d.
Expenses King's Bench Prison, and fine	200	14	9
Law expenses attending Alexander Kennet	3	7	0
Compter	52	10	0

And others which tell their own tale.

We have not quoted the charges for paper, printing, stamps, &c., as they of course fluctuate with the circulation; but it is observable that we find no such items as editor's, or sub-editor's, reporters', or correspondents' salaries. An editor, such as is known to the press of the present day, was unnecessary, in the absence of leading articles; the sub-editor's place was most likely filled by the publisher himself; the reporters were promiscuous penny-a-liners, whom we here find under the name of "news-collectors;" whilst no special correspondents, but the foreign papers, supplied the intelligence from abroad. The "City cor-

respondent" was unknown; the whole of his department cost only 4*l.* 9*s.*—"stocks" and "price of hay and straw". The 50*l.* to Sir John Fielding is rather puzzling;—could it have been paid him for reports of the police cases that came before him?

The theatres were a great expense to the papers. Among the items of payment are—

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Playhouses	100	0	0
Drury Lane advertisements	64	8	6
Covent Garden ditto	66	11	0

Up till this time dramatic criticism had been unknown: the papers paid 200*l.* a-year to each theatre for the accounts of new plays, and would reward the messenger with a shilling or half-a-crown who would bring them the first copy of a playbill. The managers used every precaution to preserve the right of printing their advertisements to the paper that had paid for them. Here are two instances at different periods:—

"The managers of Drury Lane think it proper to give notice that advertisements of their plays by their authority are published only in this paper and the *Daily Courant*, and that the publishers of all other papers who presume to insert advertisements of the same plays, can do it only by some surreptitious intelligence or hearsay, which frequently leads them to commit gross errors; as mentioning one play for another, falsely representing the parts, &c., to the misinformation of the town and the great detriment of the said theatre."—*Daily Post*, 1771.

"To prevent any mistake in future in advertising the plays and entertainments of Drury Lane Theatre, the managers think it proper to declare that the playbills are inserted by their direction in this paper only."—*Public Advertiser*, January 1st, 1765.

It was not till the days of Foote that the newspapers

sent their representatives into the pit of the theatre, and to the Bedford Coffee-house; an innovation which Foote did not appear to approve of, for he takes opportunities of attacking them in nearly every one of his farces, with all the gross exaggeration of Ben Jonson's treatment of the subject, but without the subtle wit.

Among the contributors to the *Public Advertiser* was Charles, better known as "Parson," D'Este. This curious character was brought up for the pulpit, but tried the boards before he entered it. Unsuccessful on the stage, he obtained an appointment as reader at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall. He also co-operated with Topham in the *World*, and in conjunction with Peter Andrews; but he afterwards took occasion to abuse Topham in the *Oracle*. It was he who wrote the article on Lord Loughborough, for which Woodfall had to pay a hundred pounds damages. Woodfall had never known his correspondent, who sent nothing more for the paper for some time after the trial. At length there came a letter in the old handwriting, inquiring whether further contributions would be acceptable, and soliciting a simple "Yes" or "No" for answer in the paper. Woodfall, smarting under the fine he had just paid, flew to his types to reply, and his readers were next morning much puzzled by seeing the word "NO!" in the largest characters his plant afforded.* Este also wrote "A Journey through Flanders, Brabant, Germany, and Switzerland," which was published in 1795.

Caleb Whitefoord was another contributor. He was in partnership with Mr. Brown, a wine-merchant, but took no part in the business, preferring a dalliance with the muse. He wrote humorous articles in Woodfall's paper, such as "Cross Readings," a sportive essay on "Errors of the Press," and some lively political articles called "Ship News." He also wrote the letter signed "Junia," which had the honour of being replied to by "Junius" himself.

* Taylor's "Records of my Life," vol. ii. p. 295.

Meantime Mr. Brown took care of his business, and made his money; and Caleb Whitefoord, who had deserted his trade for literature and politics, left the goodly sum of 20,000*l.* behind him.*

John Taylor, the author of "Monsieur Tonson," and afterwards editor of the *Morning Post*, and proprietor of the *True Briton* and the *Sun*, to whom we are indebted for these particulars, was himself a contributor (gratis, as he takes care to tell us), to the *Public Advertiser*, as was also Thomas Tyers, son of the original projector and proprietor of Vauxhall Gardens, and who had been bred to the bar, but abandoned it. He wrote the series of "Dialogues of the Dead," which were afterwards collected from the *Public Advertiser* and reprinted in a separate volume.

A brother of Woodfall's, William, has also gained himself a name in the history of the press, having brought out the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, June 28, 1769. He was at once the printer, editor, and parliamentary reporter of the new paper, and in the latter capacity was so faithfully served by an extraordinary memory that he went by the name of "Memory Woodfall." He continued to carry on the *Chronicle* till 1789, when he left it and started the *Diary*, which proved a failure. The *Morning Chronicle* is not, however, the oldest of existing papers: a diminutive sheet of prices of indigo, tea, cotton, cochineal; of advertisements of "sales by the candle," "rummage sales," &c., claims that distinction, and is all that is left to us of that *Public Ledger* which, started January 12, 1760, by Newberry, of St. Paul's, under the editorship of Griffith Jones, declared itself, with its first breath, "unwilling to raise expectations which we may perhaps find ourselves unable to satisfy; we therefore have made no mention of criticism or literature, which yet we do not professedly exclude, nor shall we reject any political

* Taylor's "Records of my Life," vol. i. p. 259.

essays which are apparently calculated for the public good." The "political essays" were of the average kind: letters to the printer from a literary Roman, "Probus" by signature; the literary department was as usual a series of diluted *Tatlers*, under such heads as "The Ranger," by "Sir Simeon Swift;" or "The Visitor," by "Mr. Philanthropy Candid;" and the theatrical articles were most likely written by Hugh Kelly, who, we know, hung about the office of the paper to pick up stray jobs. Thus modestly the paper opened, but it soon began to be noticed that, with the fifth number, a different style of letters had commenced, which at length assumed the form of what are so familiar to us, and have been so often and often reprinted, as the correspondence of a "Citizen of the World." For his first week's contribution Oliver Goldsmith received two guineas, and for the future he attached himself to the paper, with the agreement to write twice a week, and to receive a guinea for each article.* We will be bound that Mr. City News, the drysalter, and Mr. Full Change, the broker, got more for *their* contributions to the columns of the *Public Ledger*, in the shape of reports of sales and markets, than poor Goldy received for his Chinese Letters, as they were generally called. Griffith Jones, the editor of the *Public Ledger*, was a dear, amiable man, who, in connexion with his brother Giles and Newberry himself, wrote many of those delightful children's books which clothed history in the garb of romance to charm our youthful eyes. He was born in 1721, and after a long connexion with the *London Chronicle* and *Public Ledger*, and with the magazines, and Johnson, Smollett, and Goldsmith, closed a useful, unobtrusive life, September 12th, 1786.

The reporting powers of William Woodfall had given a character to the *London Packet* and the *Morning Chronicle* (for which he used to report) that the other papers must emulate, or be left far behind. It was no easy task to

* Forster's "Life of Goldsmith."

find reporters like him, who could sit out an entire debate upon only a hard-boiled egg, and then write out the substance next day in time for evening publication; or like William Radcliffe, the husband of the celebrated novelist, who, a graduate at Oxford and student of law, preferred newspaper-reporting to his profession; renounced his employment in our embassy in Italy, and edited the *Englishman* in 1762, having the honour of numbering Edmund Burke among his staff of writers, and afterwards became proprietor and editor of the *English Chronicle*, and, later still, part proprietor and editor of the *Morning Herald*. It is said that he would carry the substance of the debates in his head direct to the compositors' room, and there dictate to them two distinct articles, embracing the principal points of what he had heard, without referring to any notes, or committing any portion of his articles to paper; so that while a sentence in one article was being set up he had resumed the other, and was dictating it without hesitation or confusion. Such reporters as these were not as plentiful as blackberries; so the newspaper proprietors were in dismay. The *London Evening Post*, the *St. James's Chronicle*, and the *Gazetteer* gave a scanty report of the parliamentary proceedings, but they were only notes gathered in the lobbies of the Houses and in coffee-houses, by John Almon for the former, and by one Wade for the two latter papers. But whilst they were maturing their plans for a better system of reporting, a thunderbolt fell among them: parliament again declared war against the liberty of the press. This was the last struggle, and the parliament was thrown.

The fine for the breach of the privileges of the House of Lords which a printer committed in mentioning any nobleman by name, was usually 100*l*., and Lord Marchmont seems to have had a morbid passion for collecting these penalties. No matter that the nobleman's name was mentioned with favour; no matter that the nobleman himself did not care a rush about it; Lord Marchmont must

have the pound of flesh. He was in the habit, Almon tells us, of "examining the newspapers every day with the ardour that a hawk prowls for prey. Whenever he found any lord's name printed in any paper, he immediately made a motion in the House of Peers against the printer for a breach of privilege."*

In November, 1759, Say, of the *Gazetteer*, was, on the motion of this hobby-ridden lord, made to apologise on his knees at the bar of the House, for reporting in his paper that the thanks of the House had been given to Sir Edward Hawke for his victory; in 1764, Meres, the printer of the *London Evening Post*, was fined 100*l.* for mentioning the name of Lord Hereford; and in one day Lord Marchmont got 500*l.* levied upon four printers for similar offences, Baldwin of the *St. James's Chronicle* being fined 200*l.* This was the desultory way in which the House of Lords carried on the war: the Commons were bolder and less discreet.

On the 5th of February, 1771, the House, smarting under the provocation of seeing its own speeches—or something better—reported daily, had the resolution of the 26th of February, 1728,† looked up and read to it. This it confirmed, adding to it a declaration that "upon discovery of the authors, printers, or publishers of any such written or printed newspapers, this House will proceed against the offenders with the utmost severity."‡

This threat was promptly followed by action:—

February 8th. "Complaint being made to the House of the printed newspaper intituled the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, Friday, February 8th, 1771, printed for R. Thompson; and also of the printed newspaper intituled the *Middlesex Journal, or Chronicle of Liberty*, from Tuesday, February 5th, to Thursday, February 7th, 1771,

* Almon's "Biographical, Literary, and Political Anecdotes."

† See ante, p. 144.

‡ Journals of the House of Commons, vol. xxxiii. p. 142.

printed for J. Wheble; as misrepresenting the speeches and reflecting on several of the members of this House, in contempt of the order, and in breach of the privilege of the House. Ordered, that the said papers be delivered in at the table." Nearly one-third of the House was opposed to this resolution; which was only carried by 90 against 55. The papers having been delivered in and read, the House ordered the attendance of the two printers named.* Their non-attention to five different orders of the House to the same effect, incensed it, and on the 26th of February they were ordered, by 160 votes against 17, to be taken into the custody of the serjeant-at-arms for contempt.†

On the 4th of March, the serjeant-at-arms reports that he has made diligent search for the two printers, but cannot find them; whereupon the House votes a petition to the king, praying him to issue a proclamation offering a reward for their apprehension. It is presented by the privy councillors, and the king acquiesces with alacrity; on the 7th a proclamation is issued, charging all justices of the peace and others to use their utmost diligence in making search for, and arresting, the two delinquents, cautioning all persons against harbouring them, requiring all custom-house and coast-guard officers to keep watch that they do not escape by sea, and offering a reward of fifty pounds for their apprehension.‡

On the 12th of March, without having yet bagged their game, the House indulged in another *battue*. Complaint was made against William Woodfall, printer of the *Morning Chronicle*, Henry Baldwin, of the *St. James's Chronicle*, T. Evans, of the *London Packet*, T. Wright, of the *White hall Evening Post*, J. Bladon, of the *General Evening Post* and J. Miller, of the *London Evening Post*, for printing the proceed ings of the House, and they were all ordered to

* Journals of the House of Commons, vol. xxxiii. p. 149.

† Ibid. p. 208. ‡ Ibid. p. 234.

attend.* In the case of Evans, it was attempted to include in the order "all his compositors, pressmen, correctors, blackers, and devils," but the amendment miscarried.

On the 14th of March, Bladon attended, obedient to order, made his submission, and was graciously discharged; and Baldwin and Wright surrendered, acknowledged their offence on their knees at the bar, asked pardon, and promised to be good in future and not print the debates; and, on payment of the fees, they, too, were discharged. Evans's term was enlarged, and Woodfall was reported in the previous custody of the usher of the black rod, by order of the other House. But Miller, not surrendering, was ordered to be taken into custody by the serjeant-at-arms; the House also coming to a resolution that a personal service of its orders not being practicable, the leaving of the notices at his house was a sufficient service.†

On the 18th, the serjeant-at-arms made the startling announcement to the House that his messenger had succeeded in arresting Miller, but was immediately given into custody by him for assault, and carried before the lord mayor: that, although the deputy serjeant-at-arms attended and explained the facts of the case to him, his lordship (Brass Crosby, Esq., a member of that House) had declared the Speaker's warrant illegal, had discharged Miller from custody, and committed the messenger for assault!

This astounding intelligence for a moment staggered the House! Here was contumacy! here was insolence! here was — BREACH OF PRIVILEGE with a vengeance! These insolent newspapers, which had dared and defied the House before, had now found bottle-holders in the aldermen, had they? A grand blow must be struck *now*, and Brass Crosby, Esq., must attend in his place in that House and explain his conduct.‡

Wheble had been arrested and carried before (of all men

* Journals of the House of Commons, vol. xxxiii. pp. 249-51.
† Ibid. pp. 257-9. ‡ Ibid. p. 264.

in the world) Alderman Wilkes, at Guildhall, who immediately discharged him, and bound him over to prosecute, and his captor to answer, a charge of assault and false imprisonment. Thompson was also apprehended, and discharged under the same circumstances by Alderman Richard Oliver. Further, the two aldermen had both joined the lord mayor in signing the warrants of commitment in the case of Miller; and Wilkes had written a letter to his old foe, Lord Halifax, announcing the course he had taken, and declaring the arrests illegal and subversive of the liberties of the City of London, inasmuch as a Speaker's warrant could not be executed within its boundaries without the indorsement of a City magistrate. But Halifax and the House had had enough to do with Wilkes, and, desiring no further contention with him, only ordered the attendance of the lord mayor and Alderman Oliver. After some delays, arising from a fit of the gout, the lord mayor attended, and demanded to be heard by counsel at the bar. This was pettishly and hastily refused by the House; but on a subsequent application, evidently ashamed of the gross injustice of the refusal, they agreed that counsel might be heard, "so as they do not affect or controvert the privilege of the House." As the very question at issue was one in which the privilege of the House was denied, this miserable mockery of a concession was tossed contemptuously aside by the aldermen, who, on the 25th of March, 1771, attended in their places and pleaded their own cause. The lord mayor produced the charter granted to the City of London by Edward III., in the first year of his reign, and dated March 6th, which, he contended, exempted the citizens from any law process being served upon them but by their own officers; he also explained the oaths taken by the lord mayor and aldermen, which he considered bound him to defend those liberties and privileges which the City had ever enjoyed under its charter recognised by acts of parliament. Alderman Oliver echoed the defence of the lord

mayor, and declared that nothing should shake his resolution. The House then ordered the several resolutions to be read, prohibiting the reporting of its proceedings by the newspapers, and which had been carried on February 11th, 1695, January 23d, 1722, February 26th, 1728, April 13th, 1738, and April 10th, 1753; as also a resolution, carried July 13th, 1641, prohibiting even the members themselves from making their speeches public without the sanction of the House. Whilst they were solemnly engaged over this business, a messenger announced that a tumultuous mob was outside, insulting and impeding the members in their way in. The House was then "moved" to dive into precedents under the head "Mob," and look up the reports of its former proceedings in similar emergencies. The justices who were endeavouring to disperse the excited crowd were called in, ordered to report progress, and dismissed with injunctions to use every effort to stop the riot; and the House, not improved in temper by this episode, came to a resolution that the acts of discharging Miller out of custody, signing the warrant against the messenger, and holding him to bail, were each and severally breaches of privilege. The lord mayor was excused from further attendance that day, in consideration of his state of health, but at one o'clock in the morning the House proceeded to take into consideration the case of the other alderman, and, after a stormy and acrimonious debate, committed him to the Tower by a majority of 170 to 38 over the milder party, who would have had him only reprimanded by the Speaker. Carried away by fury, it ordered the attendance of Wilkes on the 8th of April; but its courage soon cooled. Startled at its own temerity, and really frightened of the defiant alderman, it got itself out of the scrape in which it had so rashly plunged by one of the most miserable shifts that ever was had recourse to by a big school bully who feared he might get the worst of an appointed battle with a plucky junior, and *sneaked* from its appointment by adjourning

from the 7th to the 9th, thus being *non est* on the 8th. On the 27th, Brass Crosby attended in his place, and another angry debate ensued, in the course of which the lord mayor repudiated a proposed amelioration of punishment in consideration of his illness, and by a majority of 202 over 39, who would have had him consigned to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms, he was committed to the Tower. The House then proceeded, "according to precedents" and with Pickwickian innocence, to appoint a committee to inquire into the *causes* of the riotous proceedings of the 25th March.

The City of London, of course, did not take the imprisonment of their chief magistrate quietly; in fact, the whole country raised its voice against the arbitrary proceedings; and the *finale* was as damaging to the dignity of the House as the rest. On the 23d of July the parliament was prorogued, and its power to hold the aldermen in durance expiring, they marched out of the Tower amidst the triumphant shouts of the multitude. The law, too, had tacitly ignored the assumed power of the Commons, for, on the 30th July, 1771, Edward Irwin Carpenter, a printer, who had arrested Wheble, was tried at Guildhall for the assault, found guilty, fined one shilling, and imprisoned for two months in Wood-street Compter. And thus, by its child's play with its privileges, did the House of Commons present the sorry spectacle of a most ridiculous defeat, in which Gog and Magog had quietly taken up its impertinent messengers in their arms and set them down outside the City gates.

But, after all the fine things that have been written about their standing up so manfully for the liberty of the press, it will be seen that Crosby and his colleagues, in fact, only stood up for the rights and privileges of the City. Had Miller had no connexion with the newspaper press—had he been guilty of a contempt, or infringed the privilege of parliament in any other way, and been arrested for it in

the same way, the aldermen, it is obvious, would have done precisely the same as they did now; had he been a tailor, and arrested a member's servant for not paying him for a new coat, the House might have ordered him into custody, and, if he had been captured in the City by the Speaker's warrant, the lord mayor would as readily have wrested the tailor as the news-printer from the hands of the House. *One* of the aldermen, no doubt, was moved by a sympathy with the press, and the writer of the *North Briton* must have had a peculiar satisfaction in crying in the face of the House of Commons, "You dare not—you shall not have this printer;" and still more menacingly in effect writing to Lord Halifax, "I have taken him out of the hands of your messenger; come on, and get him if you can!"

The moral effect of these events has, however, been lasting, and the House of Commons, lowered and lessened by them, abashed and mortified, has never since thought it worth while to risk a repetition of such a humiliating conflict with the determination of the people to know what their representatives are doing.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SHERIFFS' SONG OF TRIUMPH—A LITTLE ARMY OF MARTYRS, WHO FOUGHT AND FELL IN THE STRUGGLE—THE COURTS OF LAW VINDICATE ORDER, AND IMPARTIALLY JUDGE THE PRESS—ITS IMPROVED TONE—AND MORE RESPECTABLE WRITERS—CHARLES LLOYD AND GEORGE COLMAN—DR. KENRICK—THE BURKES — TRANSMISSION AND DELIVERY OF NEWSPAPERS—THEIR INCREASING CIRCULATION—A FEW DRY STATISTICS—THE "MORNING POST" ESTABLISHED—REV. HENRY BATE—AN EDITOR'S DANGERS AND TROUBLES IN 1777—JOHN HORNE TOOKE—HIS STRUGGLES AND TRIALS—THE NEWSPAPERS AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

THE press was now, for the first time, the acknowledged representative of the people. There it stood overlooking, perhaps sometimes overawing, those who had known and cared nothing for their constituents after they left the hustings: a jealous guardian, a watchful sentinel, a sleepless Argus; behind the Speaker's chair there had sprung up a power greater than the Speaker, for there, in the gallery, was the eye of Europe; the House of Commons had been unroofed and the world was looking in.

The sheriffs of London, in an address to the livery in 1772, thus proclaim the victory:—

"The House of Commons has tacitly acquiesced in the claim made by many of our worthy fellow-citizens for the public at large, that the constituents have a right to be informed of the proceedings of their servants in parliament. Several honest printers, in defiance of their illegal orders, gave the public all the particulars of their proceedings during the last session—proceedings which the House prudently endeavoured to hide in a darkness suited to their deeds. The same persons who asserted our rights during the last, have, during the present session, continued the

exercise of it in its fullest extent. Notwithstanding the report of the committee was in express terms that the House should order that J. Miller be taken into custody of the serjeant-at-arms, the said J. Miller is still at large, and still continues the severest attacks upon them, by faithfully publishing their proceedings, still braves their indignation, and sleeps secure in the City."

The printers were hardly so successful with the House of Lords; and while Pitt was no longer reported as "Julius Florus," or Fox as "Cnœus Fulvius," the sensitive feelings of the Earl of Winchelsea were spared by having his speech printed as that of "Caius Claudius Nero," whilst "Marcus Cato" was made responsible for the spoken sentiments of the Earl of Bath. But the watchful eye and trumpet tongue were soon there too; and the House of Peers took warning by the example of the beaten Commons, and let it be. Mr. Alexander Stephens, in his "Memoirs of John Horne Tooke," tells how Woodfall, the reporter, who deserves a page of history to himself, instead of being constantly confounded with the less brilliant Woodfall of Junius, let light upon the House of Lords: "In process of time the House of Lords also silently conceded the point, and the late Mr. William Woodfall informed me that he first published its debates on the appearance of the bill for embanking the river and erecting the noble terrace now called the Adelphi; at which period his slumbers were discomposed by nightly visions of Newgate, yeoman ushers, and serjeants-at-arms."

In this one great stride, what a world of power, dignity, and importance had the newspaper conquered for itself!

We have confined ourselves, in relating the struggles between the House of Commons and the press, to the more remarkable of the battles which were fought in that fifty years' war; and now, having arrived at the crowning conflict which set the question at rest, we may take breath, and in one glance back review the minor combats which took place

in the interval; in which the parliament fought for its privilege, not only of silent legislation, but of exemption from criticism.

July 1, 1715.—On the complaint of Robert Walpole, E. Berrington, printer, and J. Morphew, publisher, of the *London Evening Post*, were ordered into the custody of the serjeant-at-arms for publishing a letter purporting to be written by Walpole to Lord Sunderland, and also for some remarks on the case of "John Burnois, a French schoolmaster, who was whipped for speaking seditious words against his majesty." And a committee was appointed to inquire into the authorship of the same.

February 18, 1727.—Complaint made against R. Raikes, printer of the *Gloucester Journal*, for printing the proceedings of the House, and Raikes ordered to attend on the 26th; but he being ill of fever sent up a petition, setting forth that the report had been inserted without his knowledge, but that he believed it was taken from a newsletter sent by Mr. Gythens, clerk of the Bristol roads, or his assistant, to the King's Head Inn, at Gloucester. Ordered that Raikes be excused from attendance, and Gythens and John Stanley attend the House. *March* 3. —"Robert Giddins, of the Post-office, London," and John Stanley attended, and the latter confessing the authorship of the news-letter, was committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms.

March 14, 1727.—Second complaint against Raikes for publishing the debates, and also against J. Wilson, his agent at Bristol, who attended, obedient to order, on the 18th. Wilson having had no part in the printing, was discharged, but Raikes, who stated that he got the report from Edward Cave, of the Post-office, was committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms, and Cave ordered to attend. *March* 30.—Cave attended and acknowledged his offence, but stated that he got the report, with other written news-letters, which he delivered in, from William

Wye, John Stanley, John Willis, and Elias Delpeuch. Cave, Wye, Stanley, and Delpeuch were committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms.

December 2, 1739.—Complaint made against John Meres, printer of the *Daily Post*, for publishing some remarks on the "Embargo on Provision of Victual." Meres attended and expressed contrition, but was ordered into custody of the serjeant-at-arms, and the king was moved by petition of the House to prosecute him. *December* 12.—Meres petitioned the House to be discharged, on account of "his wife and several small children," and acknowledged his offence; but on the 15th his petition was refused, and a motion carried that the serjeant-at-arms should carry him before the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench (on notice being given to the Attorney-General) to give bail to meet the charge to be brought against him. *February* 10, 1740.—Meres again petitions the House, "bewailing" his conduct, declaring himself "miserably reduced by his confinement, having tired out all his friends by borrowing money of them for the support of himself, his wife, and several small children, who are become great objects of charity," and beseeching his discharge. Ordered that he be discharged, on giving bail and paying the fees.

May 15, 1742.—Complaint against J. Huggonson for printing in the *Champion*, of Captain Hercules Vinegar, May 4, a letter on the bill depending in the House for preventing frauds in the manufacture of gold and silver lace. Attended on the 17th, and apologised.

March 8, 1744.—Complaint made of Cæsar Ward for publishing reports of the proceedings in the *York Courant* of February 26. Attended, by order, on the 5th of April; confessed his transgression, and was discharged, after being reprimanded on his knees and paying the fees.

January 22, 1745.—John Gilfillan, printer of the *York Courant*, ordered to attend for an article reflecting on Admiral Vernon, a member of the House.

February 1, 1760.—Complaints against W. Eglesham, printer of the *Public Advertiser;* J. Wilkie, of the *London Chronicle;* Matthew Jenour, of the *Daily Advertiser;* and Say, Owen, and Knight, of the *Gazetteer*, for publishing the reports; all of whom attended on the 4th, expressed their sorrow, and were discharged, after receiving a reprimand on their knees and paying the fees.

January 20, 1762.—Complaint against John Wilkie, of the *London Chronicle*, who attended on the 25th, and apologised, but was ordered into the custody of the serjeant-at-arms.

February 18, 1768.—Wilkie, of the *London Chronicle*, again reprimanded on his knees for publishing an advertisement reflecting on the House, and discharged on payment of the fees.

May 8, 1769.—Charles Say, of the *Gazetteer*, and Cowburne, of the *Liverpool Chronicle*, complained of for reflecting on the character of Sir William Meredith, Bart., a member of the House; and the complaint referred to the Committee of Privileges and Elections.

On August 1, 1770, his majesty paid the 100*l.* fine inflicted on Edwards, printer of the *Middlesex Journal*, for publishing a protest of the House of Lords; and the fees of the usher of the black rod were remitted.

The practice of dragging the news-printers to the bars of the two Houses to make a cringing and hollow submission, and an abject apology for doing yesterday what they intended to do again to-morrow, was now, indeed, falling into discredit. As regarded the publication of the debates, the people would have it; and for the prevention of seditious writing, and the protection of private character, the legal tribunals of the country afforded ample provision. There could be no pretext that they were too favourable to the press; it was true that juries had returned verdicts against secretaries of state, Treasury officers, and Commons' messengers for doing illegal acts; but when the newspapers

did illegal acts, they returned verdicts against them too. Thus, when the *Whisperer*, a virulent party paper, started 17th of February, 1770, to oppose the policy of Lord North, transgressed, which it often did, the boundaries of fair comment and became personal and abusive, the printer was several times convicted and punished; and even a person for selling No. 5 was sentenced, on a conviction in the Court of King's Bench, to be imprisoned for six months; and, for selling No. 6, to a further imprisonment of a like term, and, at its expiration, to find bail, himself in 200*l.*, and two sureties in 50*l.* each, to be of good behaviour for two years.

On July 8, 1773, Miller, of the *London Evening Post*, was tried for stating that Lord Sandwich, the First Lord of the Admiralty (the "Jemmy Twitcher" of the newspapers), had sold a place in his department for 2,000*l.* He was bold enough to set up a plea of justification (which, in those days, was generally held to aggravate the offence), but had to pay 2,000*l.* damages.

On November 21, 1774, John Williams was criminally convicted, in the Court of King's Bench, of a newspaper libel on Fox, and sentenced to a fine of 100*l.*, as well as the costs of the trial, and to be imprisoned for one month.

On July 3, 1776, Lord Bolingbroke recovered 20*l.* (he had laid the damages at 2,000*l.*) from the printer of the *Morning Chronicle;* but on July 10, of the same year, an action brought by Lord Chatham against Woodfall, of the *Public Advertiser*, fell to the ground from an insufficiency in the recital of the offence.

The powers to whom it belonged constitutionally and legally to keep the press within proper bounds, were always ready to make the majesty of the laws respected, and did it with more dignity and propriety, and to much better effect, than all the arbitrary acts of the House of Commons had ever been characterised by.

It is true that the scurrility, the vulgar abuse, and

personal slander which had disgraced the newspapers so recently, were fast disappearing from their columns. Walpole says of them, in 1770:—"Every newspaper is now written in a good style;"* and the writers were not the mercenary miscreants whom his father bought and hired. Charles Lloyd, a brother of the Dean of Norwich, and private secretary to Granville, when First Lord of the Treasury, was of their number; so was George Colman, who commenced the series of "The Gentleman" in the *London Packet,* on July 10, 1775; and Dr. William Kenrick, perhaps not quite so honourable to the press as the others. Kenrick was born at Watford, in Hertfordshire, and bred to the occupation of a rule maker; but feeling, perhaps, that he "had something in him," he went to Leyden, and got his degree, and returned and settled in London. He did drudgery for the publishers, and, at last, got appointed editor of the *Morning Chronicle,* but quarrelled with the proprietors, and set up a paper in opposition—which failed. He died June 9, 1779.[111]

Associated with the newspaper press of this period were greater names than these, the three Burkes, who wrote (not, as far as we are aware, under any engagement) in the *London Evening Post.* Richard was the principal contributor, under the signature of "Valens," and he was only occasionally assisted by William and the illustrious Edmund. The writings of the latter got more frequent at the beginning of the American war, but in 1776 we find them united in an accusation against Lord George Germaine, of falsifying the *Gazette.*

The cost of transmitting the London papers into the country was excessive. They were forwarded through the agency of the clerks of the roads, under the Post-office, whose charges were as follow: "For a daily paper, 5*l.* per annum; for an evening paper, 2*l.* 10*s.*" In 1770, J. Hamilton, a bookseller, of Shoe-lane, Fleet-street, adver-

* Walpoliana, vol. i. p. 60.

tised the following reduced prices: "For a daily paper, 4*l.*; for an evening paper, 2*l.*" This was still high, considering the price of the papers themselves was 2*d.* or 2½*d.* Yet they and their circulation were gradually increasing. The ledgers of the Stamp-office show us that the number of stamps issued to newspapers throughout the United Kingdom, which in 1753 was only 7,411,757, and in 1760 was 9,464,790, had in 1774 risen to 12,300,000, and in 1775 rose to 12,680,000, increasing not quite so rapidly in the next year to 12,830,000. Perhaps this slight check was the result of Lord North's measure, which took effect on May 28th, 1776, raising the stamp from 1*d.* to 1½*d.*

Meanwhile, another of our existing papers had been established, the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, the first number of which appeared in November, 1772, under a form intended to evade the provisions of the stamp act, but which, in 1775, had become a regular morning paper, principally written by the Rev. Henry Bate. This sport of fortune was the son of a clergyman at Worcester, and after an education at Queen's College, Oxford, was ordained, and obtained the rectory of Fambridge,* in Essex. But a quiet little parish on the Crouch, in the prolific but boorish hundred of Dengie, was no place for the gay young parson, so he came to London to write plays and the *Morning Post.* Of the former he wrote eight or ten, and of the latter he continued to be the editor till 1780, when, in a tiff with his coadjutors, he left them, and started the *Morning Herald,* when speaking of which we shall meet with him again, and tell how he became Sir Bate Dudley.

The manner in which an editor was in those days held responsible for his arguments, and liable to personal collisions with his opponents, is curiously shown by what

* Not the vicarage of Farnbridge, as stated by Mr. Hunt. There is no parish of that name in Essex.

happened to Bate soon after he took the *Morning Post* in hand:—

"*January* 13, 1777.—A rencontre happened at the Adelphi Tavern, in the Strand, between Captain Stoney and Mr. Bate, editor of the *Morning Post*. The cause of quarrel arose from some offensive paragraphs that had appeared in the *Morning Post*, highly reflecting on the character of a lady for whom Captain Stoney had a particular regard. Mr. Bate had taken every possible method, consistent with honour, to convince Mr. Stoney that the insertion of the paragraphs was wholly without his knowledge, to which Mr. Stoney gave no credit, and insisted on the satisfaction of a gentleman or the discovery of the author. This happened some days before, but meeting, as it were by accident, on the day here mentioned, they adjourned to the Adelphi, called for a room, shut the door, and being furnished with pistols, discharged them at each other without effect. They then drew swords, and Mr. Stoney received a wound in the breast and arm, and Mr. Bate one in the thigh. Mr. Bate's sword bent, and slanted against the captain's breastbone, which Mr. Bate apprising him of, Captain Stoney called to him to straighten it, and in the interim, while the sword was under his foot for that purpose, the door was broken open, or the death of one of the parties would most certainly have been the issue."*

It was necessary, then, for an editor to be as skilful with the sword as with the pen, and "cold iron" was added to the dangers (in the shape of ushers of the black rod, serjeants-at-arms, general warrants, and courts of law) that "did environ" the man whose occupation it was to write the public sentiment.

We must be allowed to anticipate a few years to record another mishap which befel Mr. Bate. In 1780, he was tried before Mr. Justice Buller, at Middlesex Sessions, for a libel on the Duke of Richmond, published in the *Morning*

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1777.

Post, in which he charged the Duke with opposing the increase of the army in order to favour an invasion of the French—with conveying intelligence to the French government, &c., and brought forward other intemperate and unfounded accusations. Horwell, the publisher of the paper, proved Bate's cognisance of the libel, and the editor was found guilty, and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in the King's Bench prison, but his sentence had to stand over until the prison was repaired after the damage done to it by the rioters of 'eighty.*

Another restless spirit now takes a part in our history; and, litigious and troublesome to the government, contumacious and almost insolent to the judges, possessing much of the spirit and more than the genius of Wilkes, a refractory parson, rides on a libel through the courts of law.

John Horne (afterwards John Horne Tooke) was the son of a poulterer at Newmarket, but was born in Westminster on the 25th June, 1736, and at first educated at Westminster School, but he was afterwards removed to Eton, where either a gambol or a fray with some other youths cost him his right eye. We trace him to St. John's College, Cambridge, and next find him as usher in a boarding-school. In 1756, he entered himself of the Inner Temple, intending to devote himself to the law, for which there is little doubt he possessed many qualifications, but in 1760 his friends prevailed on him to enter into priest's orders, purchasing for him the living of Brentford, in Middlesex, worth 200*l.* or 300*l.* per annum.† Here he seems to have behaved so as to win the respect of his parishioners, but he panted for the war of politics, and fought his first battle and received his first wound in 1770. In 1769 he had written two letters to the *Public Advertiser*, signed "A Freeholder of Surrey," in which he accused George Onslow of having received a bribe for

* Douglas' "Reports of Cases in the King's Bench," p. 376.

† Stephens's "Memoirs of John Horne Tooke."

procuring a post under government. The accusation was denied by Onslow, who brought an action against his accuser, which was tried before Sir William Blackstone, at Kingston, April 6th, 1770, laying his damages at 10,000*l.* The action broke down on a technical point, but on a new trial before Lord Mansfield, Horne was cast in damages of 400*l.* On the 17th April of the following year he obtained a rule to set aside the verdict, on the ground of misdirection, but with what result we cannot discover.

The cost of this trial to Onslow (whose crime, in the eyes of Horne, was his desertion of the Wilkes party, and an acceptance of place under the Grafton administration: the measles of all young and rising politicians) was 1,500*l.*, whilst Horne got off for 200*l.* On July 23d, 1771, he founded the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights, which soon took the newspapers under its protection, more especially the *London Evening Post*, the *Public Advertiser*, and the *Middlesex Journal*, defending them against prosecutions, and paying the expenses of trials or convictions; but the society becoming a tool in the hands of Wilkes and his party, Horne seceded in disgust, and took some of the principal members with him to establish the Constitutional Society. There is no doubt he was one of the most active instigators and daring advisers, both of the printers and the aldermen, in the great contest we have narrated; but the next year he was carrying on an acrid controversy with two of its heroes, Junius and Wilkes. The *Public Advertiser* was held to be read at court, and this drew to its columns letters and articles intended to catch the royal or the ministerial eye. Junius, Sir William Draper, Wilkes, Churchill, Lloyd, and Horne, had all made it the vehicle to convey their sentiments to the throne or the cabinet, and the partisans now mounted it and fought among themselves. Mr. Stephens claims the victory for Horne in both contests; but whilst the conduct of Wilkes, now beginning to be

mercenary and time-serving, made him an easier conquest than he might once have been to Horne, Junius, in our opinion, comes out of the fray triumphant.* Horne was chafing in his surplice: it never fitted him, and he now threw it off for ever. In 1771 he had obtained his degree of M.A., but in 1773 he resigned his living, retired from the church, and turned to his old love, the bar. He soon gave proof of the quick invention and active zeal he could bring to support a cause: perhaps too daring and a degree too warm. His was indeed the spirit that, looking steadily at the end, conquered the means: he would have been great at a *coup d'état.* The trial for libel, which he brought down upon himself in 1774, gives us glimpses of his character which must not be overlooked. The manorial rights of his friend, Mr. William Tooke, being threatened by an Enclosure Bill, which there was no time to formally oppose, Mr. Tooke applied in his extremity, and on the day before the proposed reading of the bill, to Horne, declaring himself, however, too late and undone. But the ready and unscrupulous mind of Horne sees one course from which his friend recoiled in dismay—"to begin by writing a libel on the Speaker," as he coolly suggests in his reply. "A libel on such a man as Sir Fletcher Norton!" exclaims Tooke. "Yes, precisely on him," explains Horne, quietly, "for I well know that then inquiry will be made, and that he will not sanctify a dishonest act. As for the consequences, I am well aware of, and take them all upon myself." To secure success, he made the libel particularly violent, offensive, and personally abusive of the Speaker; "for," argued he, "such an outrage cannot pass for a moment unnoticed after the House is met, and must be taken into consideration before the Enclosure Bill." The next day the *Public Advertiser* contained a scurrilous letter, signed "Strike but Hear." He had not miscalculated. Immediately on its assembling,

* Posthumous Works of Junius. New York. 1829.

the Speaker calls the attention of the House to the libel; the publisher is ordered to attend, and the Enclosure Bill is shelved, only to be taken down on a future day, and cut to pieces. The next day Woodfall attends, and readily gives up his author, as Horne has told him to do; but the indignity offered to the House has been monstrous, and he is committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms. As for Horne himself, he is ordered to attend, but he snaps his fingers at the Speaker and the House, only condescending to notice their order on the 16th, with a letter pretending to view the whole matter as a mistake, and the order intended for somebody else.

But the House is not to be put off so jauntily, and next day he is brought up in custody. On the 18th, the House is satisfied with his explanations, and discharges him from custody, but the printer does not get off so easily. On the 24th, Woodfall petitions for his discharge, making pitiful submission in vain. He declares the displeasure of the House to be just, and the letter "highly, falsely, and unjustly" reflecting on the Speaker; acknowledges his conduct to be blameable, and even talks of "the enormity of his offence;" hints at the "well-known mercy and clemency of the House," and pleads impending ruin on a numerous and innocent family. But all this availed him nought; the petition was rejected. On the 2d March the House was in better temper, and Woodfall was discharged on his petition, with a reprimand from the Speaker; but he and his brother were both ordered to be prosecuted by the Attorney-General for a letter signed "A South Briton," which had appeared in the *Public Advertiser* and the *Morning Chronicle* of the 16th February.

But "Parson Horne" will not be quiet. He is now a forward member of the Constitutional Society, established for the encouragement of the revolted colonies of America, and, as such, signs and sends to the papers an advertise-

ment of its proceedings. As usual, vengeance descends with the greatest speed upon the newspapers, and John Miller, John Wilkie, Henry Randall and Henry Baldwin are brought to trial on the 17th December, 1776, for publishing the treasonable document in the preceding month of June, and on the 1st February, 1777, they are each sentenced to a fine of 100*l.* Having thus disposed of the printers, justice goes off to punish the authors, and, on July 4th, Horne is brought to trial before Lord Mansfield, at Guildhall, for writing the advertisements which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, *London Packet*, and *Public Advertiser* of the 9th of June.* He defends himself at great length, and, although with much bitterness and acerbity, displays sufficient shrewdness to have fitted him for the bar; but the jury (as indeed they could do no otherwise) found him guilty, and he was sentenced to pay a fine of 200*l.*, to be imprisoned for twelve months, and find sureties for his good behaviour for three years, himself in 400*l.* and two others in 200*l.* each. This judgment he endeavoured to overrule by a writ of error in parliament, but he only got it confirmed, although his cause was argued by Dunning, who had before refused to hold a brief against him. His confinement in the King's Bench was made light to him by the good-nature of the governor and the attention of his friends. He was allowed to reside in the rules outside the prison, and even to be absent for a few days in the country; but he reckoned his loss by the trial to amount to 1,200*l.*

We recognise no more of his letters in the papers, but his career was none the less stormy. His call to the bar was successfully opposed in 1779, on the plea that he was still a clergyman; and in 1782, having taken the name of Tooke, in deference to the wishes and as the acknowledged heir of the friend he had stood up for, he was induced to join

* Cowper's "Reports of Cases in the Court of King's Bench," pp. 672-89.

the London Corresponding Society, associated for the purpose of procuring annual parliaments and universal suffrage —of neither of which, however, he was a warm admirer—a political union which numbered in its various ramifications all over the country some fifty thousand members. This made him more than ever obnoxious to government suspicion, and his committal to the Tower, where he remained some months under very slight restraint, and his trial on September 10th, 1794, on a charge of high treason, which made the name of Erskine famous, were the results. He died at Wimbledon, March 18th, 1812, aged seventy-six, and had characteristically prepared a tomb for himself in his garden; but it not being found in good condition, he was buried at Ealing. Vacating the pulpit, and excluded from the bar, he was but partially successful with the senate. He twice contested Westminster (once, in 1790, against Fox, who brought an action against him, as was the wont in those days, for the expenses he had been needlessly put to), but was defeated, and, with his usual disregard of the means by which he worked his ends, so long as they were not dishonourable, he procured a seat for Old Sarum, the most corrupt borough of the whole rotten system, from which to drive his axe at the root of parliamentary corruption.

With the exception of the Constitutional Society's advertisements, the melancholy strife between Old England and her refractory children on the other side of the Atlantic, which divided households and brought bitterness and angry words into almost every home, seems to have involved the newspapers in no trouble. The tone they assumed was strong, decisive, even violent, but it was a sign of the times that, although the public mind was heated almost to combustion, they were allowed to scatter the most explosive materials about almost unchecked. Governments had discovered that the newspapers spoke the voice of the people, and that to put them down would require an army, not a

few crown counsel. Neither could they be so easily put down, when they gave up low and vulgar personalities, and wrote with that studied and convincing reasoning that is far more terrible. It is beyond doubt that, as the law stood, they wrote treason; but the people's sentiments, right, justice, honour, and religion were all treason to that fraternal strife: they spoke treason when they cried, "Hold, you shall not murder your brother!" they wept treason over the dead of Lexington and Concord; they shouted treason when they rejoiced that cousins' blood had ceased to flow, and men speaking the same tongue had ceased to fight. Yet the guilty law was coward, for then treason was right and law was wrong.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIRST SUNDAY PAPER—GOLDSMITH'S CHARACTER OF THE NEWSPAPERS IN 1780—FOUNDATION OF THE "MORNING HERALD"—SIR BATE DUDLEY—HUGH BOYD—LIBEL AGAIN!—THE "JESUIT"—RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN—THE FIRST EDITOR'S BOX, AND ITS INVENTOR, CRISP—FOUNDATION OF THE "TIMES"—JOHN WALTER THE FIRST—FINES AND IMPRISONMENTS—THE FIRST EVENING PAPER AND PETER STUART—JAMES PERRY—THE "ARGUS"—LOUIS GOLDSMID—SAMPSON PERRY—SALES OF NEWSPAPER PROPERTY—ENGAGEMENT OF COLERIDGE AND LAMB—STEPHEN JONES—TRANSMISSION OF PAPERS THROUGH THE POST—CIRCULATION OF NEWSPAPERS.

THERE were now seventeen papers published in London: of these, in 1777, seven came out every morning, eight thrice a week, one twice, and one only once a week. There had as yet been no Sunday papers, but the citizens could fast from politics and news on the seventh day no longer, and, in 1778, *Johnson's Sunday Monitor* appeared. The information which they hungered after was political gossip, conjectures, guesses, anticipations, pure inventions—all supposed to be genuine until contradicted next day—mysterious whisperings as from some great authority whom it would compromise, perhaps lead to the block, to name, but which were the crumbs of information which had been dropped from the great man's table, picked up by his footman, and spiced for the news-collector—perhaps greedily swallowed at last by Hugh Kelly himself, and disgorged into the newspaper office for five-and-twenty shillings a week, as per his contract with the *Gazetteer;* or, by a less conscientious mind than poor Hugh's, fabricated entirely, as Goldsmith, who knew something of these matters himself, suggests:—

"The universal passion for politics is gratified by daily gazettes, as with us in China. But, as in ours the emperor endeavours to instruct his people, in theirs the people endeavour to instruct the administration. You must not, however, imagine that they who compile these papers have any actual knowledge of the politics or the government of a state; they only collect their materials from the oracle of some coffee-house, which oracle has himself gathered them the night before from a beau at a gaming-table, who has pillaged his knowledge from a great man's porter, who has had his information from the great man's gentleman, who has invented the whole story for his own amusement the night preceding."*

Some readers were amused with such news as the following:—

"Last Tuesday night, as two old foolish watchmen, in Sugarloaf-court, Leadenhall-street, were sporting with each other, one unluckily struck the other a blow in the eye with his staff, which occasioned it to bleed in a shocking manner. No fools like old fools!"—*Westminster Journal*, April 22d, 1775.

"We hear there is likely to be the greatest opposition ever known in the memory of man for the choice of churchwardens for the parish of St. Peter in Cornhill."—*Ibid.*

Whilst small politicians fed upon such food as follows:—

"A correspondent observes, that the trading part of this nation have great reason to be alarmed at the dismal prospect of the approaching ruin of this once-flourishing nation. We, who once gave laws to all other kingdoms and powers, are now become the scorn of all the world, and it must be so while such men—such wretches as Jemmy Twitcher, a despicable but arbitrary junto, preside over us! A change of men and a change of measures—oh, how devoutly to be wished for by every lover of religion, trade, and liberty!"—*Old British Spy*, May 22d, 1779.

* Citizen of the World.

"A constant reader asks if that kingdom must not become very despicable where land admirals are employed to conduct the navy? where trade and commerce are neglected? where religion and virtue are despised? where a prince, obstinate and self-conceited, spends his hours in looking into watches, making of buttons, and playing with ivory toys; whilst the sound of the trumpet and the alarm of war strikes every thinking man with astonishment and dismay, none knowing where, when destruction and infatuation begin, they will end?"—*Old British Spy*, May 22d, 1779.

"A correspondent asks if parliament should pass a vote for distributing the widows' and orphans' money, entrusted to the Lord Chancellor, towards the support of Britons to embrue their hands and swords in American blood? Good God! what will become of our stocks and funds? Do not men of genius and calculation already fear that our Three per Cents. will be worth no more than fifty pounds for a hundred? Forbid it, good Lord! that ever England should be reduced that the widows' and orphans' money, like their tears, should be expended and applied to serve the vile purposes of such men as Jemmy Twitcher,* Sir Hugh Paleface,† drunken Rigdum,‡ &c. &c. On the contrary, God grant we may see such golden days as when Cumberland, Richmond, Rockingham, and Keppel may have the guide and lead of our treasury, our army, and navy!"—*Old British Spy*, February 20th, 1770.

Our eye runs down column after column of such paragraphs!

It was in 1780 that the Rev. Henry Bate quarrelled with his colleagues of the *Morning Post*, and set up the *Morning Herald* on his own account, the first number of which appeared on Wednesday, the 1st of November, "to be conducted," as he promises in his address to the public,

* The Earl of Sandwich. † Palliser. ‡ Rigby.

"upon liberal principles." Bate, whose previous fortunes we have traced when speaking of the foundation of the *Post*, still continued a fast parson; he wrote plays and fought duels, took the name of Dudley, together with a large estate, under the will of a friend, and immediately bought the reversion to the living of Bradwell-juxta-Mare, eleven miles from Maldon, where he laid out twenty-eight thousand pounds in restoring the church, schools, and rectory-house, now known as Bradwell Lodge, on the roof of which may be seen this magnificent editor's observatory, ornamented with Ionic columns, which form the chimneys of the whole building. The rector, on whose life the reversion depended, died, as even rectors with fat livings must, but the Bishop of London refused to induct into his place the Rev. Bate Dudley. This gave rise to a lawsuit, which lasted seven years, ended in a compromise at last, and left Dudley a poorer man by some two-and-twenty thousand pounds. But the *Herald* had espoused the cause of the Prince of Wales; and while Sheridan defended him in the House of Commons, the Prince and the Duke of Clarence befriended him in private; in 1805 he got the rich rectory of Kilcoran, and was made chancellor of the diocese of Ferns and a justice of the peace, and in 1812 he obtained a baronetcy. Sir Henry Bate Dudley died at Cheltenham in 1824.

Similar, in more than one respect, were the character and career of a contemporary, Hugh Boyd, on whom John Almon has so laboriously tried to fit the cloak of Junius. His father was Alexander Macaulay, Esq., of Glenville, in the county of Antrim, who had been a friend of Swift's, and his mother a daughter of Hugh Boyd, Esq., of Ballycastle. The second son by this marriage, and born in 1746, he became the heir of Mr. Boyd by will, and on his death he, like Bate, assumed the name as well as the wealth of his benefactor. But he had only just left Trinity College, and was, perhaps, more extravagant than the editor of the

Morning Herald. In 1766 he was called to the bar in Dublin, and soon after came over to London, and entered himself of the Temple—also entering the Temple of Hymen with a richly-endowed bride. But his estate and her dower were soon expended; in 1776 he became a political writer as the author of the *Freeholder*, and in 1779 and 1780 was associated with Almon's *London Courant*, for which he wrote the series of articles called "The Whig." His interest, like Dudley's, was good; and, in 1781, he went in the suite of the Earl of Macartney to India, and in 1782 was sent ambassador to the King of Candy. On his return from this mission he started the *Indian Observer* at Madras, where he died in 1794.

Both the *Herald*, which Dudley edited, and the *London Courant*, for which Boyd wrote, suffered prosecution in the next year (1781). On the 4th of July, "the late printers of the *London Courant* and the *Noon Gazette*, the publisher of the *Morning Herald*, and the printer of the *Gazetteer*, received sentence in the Court of King's Bench for a libel on the Russian ambassador; the printer of the *London Courant*, as the original publisher, to be imprisoned one year, and stand for one hour in the pillory at the Royal Exchange; the printer of the *Noon Gazette* to pay a fine of one hundred pounds, and to be imprisoned one year, and, for an aggravated paragraph, to be imprisoned six months after the expiration of the first imprisonment, and pay a second fine of one hundred pounds; the publisher of the *Morning Herald* to pay a fine of one hundred pounds, and be imprisoned one year; and the printer of the *Gazetteer* (being a female) to pay a fine of fifty pounds, and be imprisoned for six months."* On the next day, and for the same offence, the printers of the *Whitehall Evening Post* and *Middlesex Journal* were also sentenced to pay a fine of one hundred pounds each, and be each

* *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1781.

imprisoned one year; and the printer of the *St. James's Chronicle* to pay the fine without suffering the imprisonment.

Truly, the Russian ambassador must have had full revenge.

The year 1782, as far as we can trace, saw the first connexion with the press of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who was shortly to shed such immortal lustre on his name by his eloquent defence of its liberties, and who now appears to have been united with others in bringing out the *Jesuit*. It is not very agreeable to have to add that, on its party afterwards coming into power, a prosecution which the fallen government had brought against its printer was allowed to proceed, and he was left to suffer the full term of the year's imprisonment to which he was sentenced.

From Brinsley Sheridan to Samuel Crisp! Well, there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and while we record when the one came into newspaper life, let us not omit to tell when the other went out of it. In January, 1784, then, in his seventy-first year, died Samuel Crisp, who first introduced the "editor's box" at newspaper offices! He was a strange, eccentric, but far from useless member of society. He had been a broker on 'Change, but, having retired from business, devoted his leisure to the invention of useful little matters, or proposals of useful little projects. The mile-stones round London were among his offspring. He lived for many years in the house where he died, in Macclesfield-street, Soho, and one of his harmless eccentricities was to ride daily by the stage-coach to Greenwich, and return immediately; a practice which he kept up for fourteen years, paying the proprietor of the coach twenty-seven pounds a-year as an equivalent for his fare.*

A more important event took place in January, 1785, on the thirteenth day of which there appeared No. 1 of the

* Hone's "Every Day Book," p. 102.

Daily Universal Register, a paper of four pages, principally designed, it would seem, to introduce to the public a new invention of printing with types representing words and syllables instead of only letters—a patent process, conceived by one Henry Johnson, a compositor, and which was to save time, trouble, expense, and errors. The price of the first number was twopence-halfpenny, and the printer and proprietor was John Walter, of Printing-house-square, who appears to have suffered great annoyances and losses in his attempts to introduce his logographical hobby into universal practice; but in three years afterwards he found the title of his new paper inconvenient, and on the 1st of January, 1788, forged that iron name which every morning knocks at the door of a sleeping world, and bids it, in a voice of thunder, wake!

THE TIMES!

The reasons for this change Walter thus describes:—"The *Universal Register*, from the day of its first appearance to the day of its confirmation, has, like Tristram (Shandy), suffered from unusual casualties, both laughable and serious, arising from its *name*, which, on its introduction, was immediately curtailed of its fair proportion by all who called for it—the word *universal* being universally omitted, and the word *register* being only retained. 'Boy, bring me the *Register*.' The waiter answers, 'Sir, we have not a library, but you may see it at the New Exchange Coffee-house.' 'Then I'll see it there,' answers the disappointed politician, and he goes to the New Exchange and calls for the *Register*; upon which the waiter tells him that he cannot have it, as he is not a subscriber, and presents him with the Court and City Register, the Old Annual Register, or the New Annual Register, or, if the coffee-house be within the purlieus of Covent Garden, or the hundreds of Drury, slips into the politician's hand *Harris's Register* of ladies. For these and other reasons, the parents of the *Universal Register* have added to its original name

that of the *Times*, which, being a monosyllable, bids defiance to corruptors and mutilators of the language."

Walter, who appears to have been somewhat of a dull plodding man, with his head full of the logographic system, which was to create a revolution in the world of letters, appeals in lachrymose style to the public ever and anon, to "support" him against the jokes and ridicule which his system brought down upon him, till, at last, having persevered with admirable obstinacy and to the serious detriment of his finances, he was content to adopt the commonplace way of printing his paper, and the *Times* ceased to be "printed logographically." It made little or no sensation in the world, and certainly gave no indications of future power. For, in truth, it possessed none; the *Post*, the *Herald*, the *Public* and *General Advertiser*, had the ear of the public and the lion's share of weight and influence, and the circulation of Walter's offspring was small and sluggish. In fact, we have been informed, on the very best authority, that the circulation of the paper, as late as 1803, when its original founder yielded up its management into the hands of his son, did not exceed 1,000 copies a day. It is, however, only fair to state that at that time the *Morning Post*, according to the *Gentleman's Magazine* of July, 1833, circulated only 4,500, and none of the other daily papers exceeded 3,800.

But while Walter pursued the even tenor of his way, unmolesting and unmolested, his more prominent contemporaries were once more made to feel the drawbacks that attend popularity. In February, 1786, the *Morning Herald* and *General Advertiser* accused Pitt of gambling in the funds, a charge which the minister thought damaged his character to the extent of ten thousand pounds; but the jury thought differently, and gave him damages of two hundred and fifty pounds against the *Herald*, and one hundred and fifty against the *Advertiser*. In the same year, too, the *Public Advertiser* of Henry Woodfall got

into trouble, and had to sustain actions for libel brought by Edmund Burke and Lord Loughborough. Burke laid his damages at five thousand pounds, but only got a hundred; and Lord Loughborough (the Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas) made Woodfall pay for "intending to vilify him, by causing him to be suspected of being in bad circumstances, and not able to pay his debts, or willing to pay them without an execution." *

Neither did Walter steer clear very long of prosecutions. As the new paper felt its feet it began to imitate its seniors: it got more bold, adopted a higher tone, and commented with greater freedom on public matters. In 1789, Walter had ventured upon some strictures on the Duke of York, for the publication of which he was criminally prosecuted, and sentenced to pay a fine of fifty pounds, be imprisoned for one year in Newgate, and stand in the pillory for one hour, besides giving securities at the end of the term of his imprisonment, himself in five hundred pounds, and two householders in one hundred pounds each, for his good behaviour for seven years. But the infant *Times* was not so soon silenced. In the next year it was thought necessary to again prosecute Walter, for two libels on the Prince of Wales and Duke of York, charging them with having, by improper conduct, incurred the disapprobation of their royal father; and one on the Duke of Clarence, whom he had accused of returning home from the place where his ship was stationed, without the authority either of the Admiralty or his commanding officer. On the 3d of February, 1790, he was brought up in custody from Newgate, where he was working off his former punishment, and, for the first of these libels, sentenced to pay a fine of one hundred pounds, and be imprisoned for one year from the expiration of his present term; and for the second he was simply fined one hundred pounds. But, after under-

* See ante, page 193.

going four months of his second term of imprisonment, Mr. Walter was liberated, at the intercession of the Prince of Wales, on the 9th of March, 1791.

A forged number of the *London Gazette* was issued on the 22d of May, 1787; but, although every pains was taken to discover the authors, they evaded the keen eye of the law officers who were set to find them out.

Three years after the foundation of the *Times*, and in 1788, the first (daily) evening paper made its appearance—the *Star*, founded by Peter Stuart. The first editor was Macdonald, a Scotch poet, the author of "Vimonda," a tragedy, and he was succeeded by Mayne, the author of the "Siller Gun," of whom we shall have to speak more fully. Lamb's Bob Allen was also a contributor. The *Star* survived till the 15th of October, 1831, when it merged into the *Albion*.

In the next year, "Memory Woodfall," seceding from the *Morning Chronicle* and setting up his new paper, the *Diary*, was succeeded in the management of the former by James Perry, who elevated it very speedily to a higher position than it had yet occupied. Perry (born October 30th, 1756) was the son of a wright or house-joiner of Aberdeen, who spelt the name Pirie, and managed to send his son successively to the school and chapel of Guriveh, kept by Mr. Farquhar, to the grammar school of Aberdeen, and finally, in 1771, to the Mareschal College, where he entered the Latin and Greek classes and continued three years. He was then articled to Arthur Dingwall Fordyce, an attorney; but at the expiration of his term his father had fallen into difficulties, and was in no position to put him out in the world; so, being a good dancer, he was induced to join a company of actors, composed of Digges, Mills, and others, who were then at Aberdeen, and with whom he appeared as "Sempronius," and in second-rate characters (occasionally varying his performances with a hornpipe between the acts), at Montrose, Arbroath, Dun-

dee, and Perth, and, according to Holcroft, who had then joined the troop, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne; but on their return to Edinburgh, Digges, the manager, frankly informed him that his brogue unfitted him for theatrical pursuits. Procuring recommendations to Manchester, he obtained a situation as clerk to a Mr. Dinwiddie, with whom he remained two years, and then bent his steps to London, hopeful of achieving success with his pen. He, however, had a difficulty in getting a subsistence by it at first, and was but a poor publisher's hack.

The *General Advertiser* was then just started, and Perry in idle hours penned some articles and letters, which he dropped into its letter-box, and which were always inserted. Seeking employment, and calling upon Richardson and Urquhart, a publishing firm to whom he had got letters of recommendation, he found Mr. Urquhart reading the *General Advertiser*. "I have heard of no situation for you, young man," he said, looking up from his paper, but added, smiling, "If, now, you could write such an article as I have just been reading, I could give you immediate employment myself." It happened to be one of Perry's own articles, as he soon proved by producing another in the same writing, which he was carrying to the printers. Mr. Urquhart then informed him that they were the principal proprietors of the *Advertiser*, and were in want of just such a person, and, next day, engaged him at a salary of a guinea a week, and half a guinea a week for any assistance he might give to the *London Evening Post*. His talent for reporting was first made apparent in the trials of Admirals Keppel and Palliser, when, for six weeks together, he sent up daily from Portsmouth eight columns of the reports, taken by himself alone, which increased the circulation of the paper by several thousands daily. This attracted the attention of the newspaper world, and he was offered the editorship of the *Gazetteer*, on the death of Wall, with a salary of four guineas a week, a post which he only undertook on

condition of being unfettered in the expression of his political opinions, which were Foxite. Perry soon effected a revolution in reporting. Woodfall, single-handed, was bringing out his reports of the night's debates on the following evening—sometimes not before midnight; Wall had been weeks in arrear sometimes; but Perry, by having reliefs and relays of reporters, brought out the night's debate on the following morning, anticipating Woodfall by nearly twelve hours. In 1789, in conjunction with a Mr. Gray, he purchased and edited the *Morning Chronicle.* Gray (who was also a Scotchman) had been tutor in Greek and Latin at the Charter-house, the head master of which left him five hundred pounds for good conduct; this, joined to the same amount which Perry borrowed of Ransom and Co., the bankers, and a loan (afterwards made a present to him by will) which he procured of Bellamy, wine merchant, in Chandos-street, and doorkeeper at the House of Commons, purchased the *Chronicle.** Gray, who was a man of more classical learning, if less lively talent, than Perry, died soon after, and the property devolved upon his partner, subject to an annuity payable to Gray's sister. It became in Perry's hands a mine of wealth, producing an income larger than ever newspaper had produced before, varying from six to ten thousand per annum. Without sacrificing independence—even gaining the paper a high character for the boldness of its tone and the vigour of its writing—he avoided giving provocation to the government, except on two trifling occasions, for a period of forty years' writing, including the whole of the period when the venom of the French Revolution was poisoning every pen, and its wild and lawless principles pulling at the bonds of order and throwing down the hedges and barriers of society.

* Mr. Knight Hunt ("Fourth Estate," vol. ii. p. 103) introduces a portion of these facts as "some curious and hitherto unpublished particulars." Mr. Hunt is wrong; they all appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* of Sir Richard Phillips for January, 1822.

On both occasions, when defended by Erskine and when defending himself, he was acquitted; but once he and Lambert, his printer, were confined in Newgate for a contempt of the House of Lords, in calling it a "hospital of incurables." This was during the editorship of Spankie (afterwards Serjeant Spankie, M.P. for Finsbury, and Attorney-General of Bengal), to whom he was obliged to entrust the office, on account of his numerous avocations at the time, for Perry did not confine his talents or his industry to the *Chronicle*. He wrote and published several political pamphlets and poems, and in 1782 founded, and for a year edited, the "European Magazine." He was often a busy and eloquent speaker in the debating societies of the day, at meetings of the Whig Club, the Westminster elections, &c. He edited for several years "Debrett's Parliamentary Debates." Unfortunately, too, he entered into commercial speculations: one, a scheme of Mr. Booth's for polygraphic paintings, which failed; the other, the purchase of some mills at Merton, which proved a heavy loss and much embarrassed him at the time. He was a man of strict honour and integrity, of persevering industry, active benevolence, and strict consistency in all his actions and opinions, and died at Brighton, universally respected in the profession, in December, 1821, at the age of sixty-five.* He had been twice married, and left six children. He could scarcely, perhaps, be called a scholar, but was fond of black-letter lore, and had at his house in Tavistock-square a curious collection of rare books, valued at fifteen hundred pounds. Leigh Hunt, in describing Perry's personal appearance, lets fall a wicked hint that his political avocations did not make him indifferent to softer sentiments:—"He was a lively, good-natured man, with a shrewd expression of countenance and twinkling eyes, which he not unwillingly turned upon the ladies."† The

* Monthly Magazine, vol. lii. pp. 565-7.

† Autobiography of Leigh Hunt, vol. ii. p. 115.

character which he has received from a more serious contemporary, does justice to his generous and manly disposition:—"He held the office of editor for nearly forty years, and he held firm to his party and his principles all that time—a long time for political honesty and consistency to last! He was a man of strong natural sense, some acquired knowledge, a quick tact, prudent, plausible, and with great heartiness and warmth of feeling." . . . . "His cordial voice, and sanguine mode of address, made friends, whom his sincerity and gratitude insured."*

Of the same name, but not possessing one single attribute in common, was a contemporary newspaper celebrity —or perhaps we should rather say notoriety—Sampson Perry, editor of the *Argus*. An infamous paper of the same name had been started in Paris by an English Jew, one Louis Goldsmid, who had fled the country to avoid a justly-deserved punishment, and who used it as a weapon of attack against everything English, in which honourable pursuit he was assisted with funds by the French minister of foreign affairs. On a hint that by making a submission he could get his sentence reversed, he came over to England, and started a weekly paper called the *Anti-Gallican Monitor*, attacking everything French: again changing sides on the restoration of Louis XVIII., who bought him with a bribe and a pension. Sampson Perry, who had been first a surgeon and then captain of militia, took up the *Argus* and wrote up the most revolutionary doctrines, deliberately throwing obloquy on the character of those whom he could not fairly and honourably overcome by argument. He started (or rather revived) the paper in 1789, "at an expense," as he says, "of four thousand pounds," and in 1790 was prosecuted for a seditious libel in stating that the king and Pitt had kept back important information for stock-jobbing purposes, and being found

* Edinburgh Review, vol. xxxviii. p. 361.

guilty, he was fined and imprisoned. In 1792, he was indicted for a libel on the House of Commons, and fled from prosecution. "I put a shirt and a pair of stockings in my pocket," he says,* "and with only eleven guineas in my purse, I set off to Brighthelmstone," from whence he escaped to Dieppe. The trial came on in the Court of King's Bench on December 10th, and Perry, neither appearing in person nor by counsel, was found guilty, and a reward of a hundred pounds was offered for his apprehension. In France he got into the congenial company of Tom Paine, Danton, and the revolutionists and riff-raff of all nations, who had come to fraternise with their hands in each other's pockets and their knives at each other's throat. The absence of the head conspirator lost for the *Argus* such weight as he had gained for it, as a dangerous and reckless paper, and soon after his conviction it fell to the ground.

Notwithstanding the excitement of the times, newspaper property was not very flourishing; a few papers took the lead, the rest were "nowhere." Even the *Chronicle* only sold 1,148 a day in March, 1797, and 1,537 a day in March, 1798. The copyright of the *Oracle*, daily paper, circulating 800 a day, was bought by Peter Stuart, in 1795, for eighty pounds; and the copyright, house, and materials of the *Morning Post*, circulating only 350 a day, were transferred to himself and his brother Daniel for six hundred. The *Post* had suffered a heavy prosecution, three years before its sale, at the suit of Lady Elizabeth Lambert, who gained a verdict against it for libel, with damages of four thousand pounds. This, with the costs, no doubt crippled a paper already not very strong, and hastened its sale.

"In those days," says Lamb, "every morning paper, as an essential retainer to its establishment, kept an author, who was bound to furnish daily a quantum of witty para-

* Observations prefixed to a Sketch of the French Revolution. By Sampson Perry. London: 1796. 2 vols.

graphs. Sixpence a joke—and it was thought pretty high too—was Dan Stuart's settled remuneration in these cases. The chat of the day, scandal, but, above all, dress, furnished the material."

The *Oracle* was, at one time, edited by James Boaden, the author of a Life of John Kemble, and of Mrs. Siddons. Boaden was born at Whitehaven in 1762, and died in London on the 16th of February, 1839.

A laborious editor of the time was Stephen Jones (a son of Giles Jones, the Secretary of the York Building Society, and brother of Griffith Jones), the originator and many years compiler of a work which was intended to make newspaper literature of a more permanent character and give it a more lasting effect. This was the "Spirit of the Press," an annual volume containing all the best articles which had appeared in the newspapers during the year. Jones, who was born in 1763, and brought up at St. Paul's School, was originally designed by his friends for a sculptor, but he preferred printing, and worked at the trade for some time in Fetter-lane. In 1797 he was made editor of the *Whitehall Evening Post*, which he afterwards left for the *General Evening Post*. In 1799 he issued his first volume of the "Spirit of the Press," and from time to time wrote and compiled various other works of some value, editing also for some time the "European Magazine." He died in 1828.

A few other newspaper men of this period or a little antecedent, were Davies, the actor-bookseller, who had the "very pretty wife," "mouthed a sentence as curs mouth a bone," wrote the life of Garrick, and died in 1785: he contributed to the *St. James's Chronicle;* George Alexander Stevens, the commentator on Shakspeare, who wrote for the same paper; and John Huddleston Wynne, editor of the *Gazetteer*. This pushing genius was born in 1743, and was for some time a compositor on the *General Evening Post;*

but, on writing for the papers he assumed the name of "George Osborn, Esq., and was the "Mother Osborn" of Sir Robert Walpole's time. He also edited the "Lady's" and the "British" Magazines. He supported the government during the American war, but was so improvident that he died in very indigent circumstances, in November, 1788.

The number of papers coming out daily in London, in 1790, was fourteen, with seven twice a week, and eleven weekly. In 1792, the number was thirteen daily, and twenty weekly or twice a week; whereas, ten years previously, in 1782, it had been nine daily, nine twice a week, and none weekly. In 1795 there were fourteen daily, ten thrice a week, two twice a week, and twelve weekly. In 1777 the circulation of papers throughout the kingdom was 13,150,642; in 1778, 13,240,059; in 1779, 14,106,842; in 1780, 14,217,371; in 1781, 14,397,620; in 1782, 15,272,519; in 1790 it had dropped to 14,035,639, and in 1792 it only reached 15,005,760.* The greater portion of these passed through the Post-office, carrying their information into every nook and corner of the land. The law which now principally rules the press was made at this time; and the 38th of George the Third, chapter 78, requires that an affidavit shall be made at the stamp-office on the starting of a new journal, stating the name and place of abode of the printer, publisher, and proprietor of the new paper, the address at which it is to be printed, the proposed title, &c., without conforming with which a party printing a newspaper may be apprehended by warrant; and further enjoining that a copy of each paper shall be left at the stamp-office, within six days of its publication, under pain of a penalty of one hundred pounds.

The *British Gazette and Sunday Monitor* of January 10th, 1796, gives the number passing annually through the

* "Encyclopædia Britannica," and "Encyclopædia Londinensis."

post as twelve millions, whereas, before Mr. Palmer's improvement in the system of mail communication, the number had not exceeded two millions.

It may not have struck some people before, that a man whom they may or may not have heard of as having introduced mail-coaches, had any hand in securing the liberties of the country, or adding in so large a degree to the influence and usefulness of the press.

CHAPTER XV.

JOHN BELL AND HIS EDITOR—TWO PAPERS AT LAW—CANNING AND HIS PARTY—THE "ANTI-JACOBIN"—THE POETRY OF THE "ANTI-JACOBIN"—THE TWO GIFFORDS, AND DR. WOLCOTT'S ATTACK UPON ONE OF THEM—"HUMPHREY HEDGEHOG"—THE "MORNING CHRONICLE" GROSSLY ATTACKED, AND PERRY NOBLY DEFENDED—THE "COURIER" IN PERIL—AN EXCUSE FOR RESTRAINING THE PRESS—PITT BRINGS IN HIS BILL—A STARTLING FICTION—NEWSPAPERS AND HIGH TREASON—BEWARE OF THE FRENCH!—CHIVALRY OF TIERNEY, AND RUFFIANISM OF LORD TEMPLE—GREAT DEBATE; SHERIDAN, TIERNEY, HOBHOUSE, PULTENEY, JEKYLL, LORD WILLIAM RUSSELL, AND SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, STAND BY THE PRESS IN THE HOUR OF ITS NEED—WILBERFORCE VOTES FOR RESTRAINING IT—THE "CHARTERED LIBERTINE," AND THE "ANGUISH OF MIND" OF THE GOOD MAN—THE BILL PASSED—ITS PROVISIONS.

A FREQUENTER of Fleet-street towards the latter part of the century, might have been familiar with the form of a convivial-looking man, hurrying along, with an occasional glance over his shoulder, betraying a mistrust that he was being followed, and rushing to the sanctuary of his own house—"a plain man with a red face, and a nose exaggerated by intemperance." This was John Bell, bookseller to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and proprietor and publisher of "Bell's British Theatre,"—a man of meagre education but great taste, not only gross and sensual in the matter of wine and women, but refined in regard to literature and art. He had brought out the "British Theatre" in a costly form and lost money by it, and, in the midst of his embarrassments, invited his Royal patron to an entertainment at his house,—and thus put the finishing stroke to his fortunes. He was thenceforward the victim of duns and lawyers: the quarry of writ-servers and bailiffs,—

breathing an atmosphere of debt and danger. Yet the man was ever cheerful, hopeful, trustful: "with sparkling black eyes, a good-natured smile, gentlemanly manners, and one of the most agreeable voices I ever heard," as the writer whom we have already quoted describes him, "he had no acquirements, perhaps not even grammar."*. In his extremity he tried a newspaper speculation, and *Bell's Weekly Messenger*—a paper which enjoyed a large sale and considerable influence for more than twenty years afterwards, and is the only one of its weekly contemporaries which has survived to the present day—was started on its fortunes May 1st, 1796. He picked up a strange, loose, clever sort of character for his first editor. One Bodini, a foreigner, who had been a teacher of languages in some of the first families, an opera-house poet, and a thorough adventurer, although a man of unquestionable ability. Mr. Leigh Hunt thus describes his first impression of this poor, lost scholar:—"A person who looked the epitome of squalid authorship. He was wretchedly dressed and dirty, and the rain, as he took his hat off, came from it as from a spout." All the money he earned was dissipated in extravagance and spent in ale-houses; and when, some years afterwards, he fell under suspicion, and, sent out of the country under the Alien Act, became a reader of the English newspapers for Bonaparte, the last that his old friends heard of him was that he had started a carriage and was dashing about Paris with the equipage of a nobleman. Bell survived till February 26th, 1831.

A newspaper trial of this year presents the unusual feature of the proprietors of one paper seeking damages against the proprietors of a rival journal, for causing to be conveyed to it false news, with a view to bring it into disrepute. On the 9th of July, 1796, the action was tried in the Court of King's Bench, between the proprietors of the *Telegraph* and the proprietors of the *Morning Post*, for the injury the

* Autobiography of Leigh Hunt.

former paper sustained by receiving as authentic, and publishing as true, a forged French newspaper purporting to contain the preliminaries for peace between the Emperor and the French republic, such forged paper having been forwarded from Canterbury at the instance of the proprietors of the *Morning Post*. The jury found a verdict for the *Telegraph*, with one hundred pounds damages. A second trial arose out of this forgery, for a Mr. Dickenson having laid it to the door of Goldsmid the stock-jobber, the latter brought an action against him for the slander, and recovered fifteen hundred pounds damages.

The next year witnessed another of those attempts on the part of the men in power to establish a newspaper which should strengthen their position, which have seldom been successful. Canning and his friends projected a new weekly paper for the support of the government, to be called the *Anti-Jacobin*, and Dr. Grant was solicited to undertake the management of it; and, on his refusal, it was offered to William Gifford, then at the outset of that wonderful career which floated him ashore from before the mast of a coasting vessel, and left him, high and dry, in the editorial chair of the "Quarterly Review." Party writers seldom get weighed in honest scales by their own generation, and if Gifford has been exalted to too great an eminence by the lavish encomiums of his own party, he certainly did not deserve much of the bitterness with which he has been assailed by the Whigs. That very bitterness goes far to show that his satire was biting, and that his wit was sharp enough to take off the skin at every stroke. Byron called him the first satirist of the day,* and we believe it was Canning who placed him next to Pope: but these were the too partial opinions of personal friends and political sympathisers; yet, if exaggerations are admitted on one side, let them be on both. A satirist in the beginning of his life, and a partisan reviewer for the remainder

* English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, note 68.

of it, is not the man of whom we should believe everything that is said in disparagement: his memory should be judged with liberality, for he is sure to have had enemies enough in his lifetime who did their best to blacken it. His own modest biography, prefixed to his edition of Juvenal,* describes his career from his apprenticeship to a cobbler to his courtship of the Muse; but he had not then engaged in partisan warfare or newspaper controversy, for we believe the *Anti-Jacobin* was the first paper with which he was connected. His satires of "The Baviad" and "The Mæviad" had, no doubt, brought him under the notice of Canning and his party; and he soon found himself surrounded and supported by a brilliant party of contributors. John Hookham Frere, Jenkinson, afterwards Earl of Liverpool, George Ellis, Lord Clare, Lord Mornington, afterwards Marquis of Wellesley, Lord Morpeth, afterwards Earl of Carlisle, Baron Macdonald, and other less distinguished combatants in the battles of the time, contributed most of the prose articles. Pitt wrote frequently for it; but, according to Mr. E. Hawkins of the British Museum, his contributions were uncertain and generally very late. In the prose department, which was never distinguished for its moderation, three columns in each number were headed respectively "Lies," "Misrepresentations," "Mistakes," and in these columns the statements put forth by the newspapers in the opposite interest were replied to, or contradicted, or explained. But it was in its poetry that the *Anti-Jacobin* displayed its strength of talent; and here, quoting from the notes on Canning's own copy, we find the names of Hely Addington, Hammond, B. Ellis, Bragge, afterwards Lord Bathurst, Southey, A. F. Westmacott, and W. Nares, as well as Gifford, Canning, Frere, Lord Carlisle, George Ellis, the Marquis of Wellesley, Lord Morpeth, and Baron Macdonald, picking off those whom the heavy

* "The Satires of Juvenal," by William Gifford, with autobiography of the editor.

artillery of prose had not yet pounded. "The Poetry of the *Anti-Jacobin*" was collected, and had gone through four editions in 1801. In 1852, it was again printed, with notes and explanations of those passages and allusions which, by the lapse of time, had become obscure, and with illustrations from Gilray, and, in that form, went through a second edition in 1854. Mr. Charles Edmonds, the editor of these reprints, describes the manner in which the writers went to work to carry their purpose through—like those of the *John Bull* of an after age, without any very scrupulous regard to the means: "These gentlemen entered upon the task with no common spirit. Their purpose was to blacken their adversaries, and they spared no means, fair or foul, in the attempt. Their most distinguished countrymen, whose only fault was their being opposed to government, were treated with no more respect than their foreign adversaries, and were held up to public execration as traitors, blasphemers, and debauchees. So alarmed, however, became Mr. Wilberforce and others of the more moderate supporters of ministers at the boldness of the language employed, that Mr. Pitt was induced to interfere, and, after an existence of eight months, the *Anti-Jacobin* ceased to exist."* The paper (the price of which was sixpence) did not complete an eight months' existence. The first number, which contains the prospectus believed to have been written by Canning, was dated the 20th of November, 1797, and the last (No. 34), the 9th of July, 1798. The "Epistle to the Editor of the *Anti-Jacobin*," in the *Morning Chronicle* of January the 17th, 1798, which was replied to by Canning, was written by William, Lord Melbourne.

His connexion with the *Anti-Jacobin* nearly cost Gifford a broken head, if no more serious injury,—and that, too, at the hands of a brother satirist, Dr. Wolcott. Some retort which had appeared in the paper upon a satire of

* "Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin, with notes by Charles Edmonds." 2d edition. Editor's preface, p. 8.

"Peter Pindar," had contained sufficient wit, or truth, or venom, or sufficient of all, to raise the doctor to a frenzy; and, finding his pen impotent to resent it, he took a heavy bludgeon and waited near the shop of Wright, the bookseller, in Piccadilly, where the paper was published, in ambush for its editor. Gifford soon made his appearance, and Wolcott raised his cudgel to strike him down, but an active passer-by knocked it on one side, and Gifford had time to escape into the shop. A mob gathered round, who were so indignant at Wolcott's conduct, that they carried him off and rolled him in the gutter, from whence he went home and wrote a spiteful satire upon his adversary, which he called "A cut at a Cobbler."

So extraordinary a career as Gifford's has a moral of its own, and presents an example to indolent and an encouragement to despondent genius. His father was a painter and glazier at Ashburton, in Devonshire, where the boy was born in 1756; but he appears to have been an ill-conducted, dissolute sort of man, and would go off to sea for a time, leaving his wife to shift for herself while he was gone, and treating her with neglect and moroseness, if not actual violence, when he came back, spending his wages and his prize-money in drink and among loose companions —in fact, a ne'er-do-well, dissipated character, who had not the redeeming point of easy-going good nature common to a sailor: only a seaman with the painter's cholic. His boy was eleven years old and had been three years at the free school, making little progress, when this careless parent died and left him to the charge of the hard-working and excellent woman, his poor neglected wife, who was slaving for their maintenance with a child of a twelvemonth old in her arms. For these two she toiled as none but fond mothers can toil—she borrowed money to continue her husband's business, which had been going to wreck; but she soon discovered that her men, to whom she was necessarily compelled to trust many of the details of the trade,

were robbing her. Still she toiled and tried, till her heart broke, and she closed her eyes upon her two loved little children, standing alone in the great world, without a friend or a halfpenny, and, soon, without a roof to cover them, for the man who had lent her the money put in a distress and swept away the whole of her worldly goods. The youngest of the two orphans, not yet two years old, was carried to an almshouse; and little William, then twelve years old, would have had to accompany him, but that murmurs arose in Ashburton at the harshness of his mother's creditor, who, to quiet them, affected to take charge of him and put him to school. In three months, however, hoping that the indignation of the townsmen slumbered, the man removed him and put him quietly on board a coaster trading from a neighbouring port. Here some good folks from Ashburton, visiting the place, observed his ragged and neglected condition, and talking about it when they got home, again aroused the sympathy of those who had known his mother, and he was fetched back again, sent to school, and apprenticed to a shoemaker. As for his poor little brother,

"The child of misery, baptized in tears,"

he fell into all sorts of hardships from his mother's arms. The parish bound him to a husbandman, who treated the friendless little fellow with incredible cruelty. At nine he broke his thigh, and, at last, a place was procured for him on board ship; but the hapless child, fortunate for the first time in his life, died before he joined it.

The other of that fond mother's sons still floated among the beating waves of life. In his master's attic, he would sit up all night reading treatises on algebra and studying abstruse subjects, "without a farthing on earth or a friend to give him one," as he pathetically relates—pen, ink, and paper, even, being beyond his reach; so he beat out pieces of leather as smooth as possible, and wrought his problems

on them with a blunt awl. At length, composing in his head some trifling poems, he recited them to his fellow-workmen, who rewarded him with halfpence, which he soon converted into the coveted pens, ink, and books; but a cruel disappointment awaited him even as he hugged his treasures in his attic. His little hoard was discovered and swept away by his illiterate master, who entertained the contempt for books and learning then too common among his class. At the age of twenty, he was found out and taken up by a Mr. Cookesley, a benevolent surgeon, who set up a subscription to buy up the remainder of his term and improve his education: and, after two years and two months' preparation, he was pronounced fit for the University, and got the place of Biblical Lecturer at Exeter College, Oxford, where he projected the idea of rendering Juvenal's Satires into English. In 1781, his benefactor Cookesley died, and all seemed dark again: but friends were raised up to him, even in the desert, and, at last, the merest accident presented him to Lord Grosvenor, who took charge of his future welfare, and, for a time, gave him an asylum under his roof. His lordship sent him as travelling tutor to his son, on his making the grand tour, and for a period of twenty years continued to befriend him. In 1794, Gifford published his first satire, "The Baviad," the shafts of which were aimed at the fry of poetasters who then swarmed: and soon afterwards produced "The Mæviad," aiming at a reform of the taste in dramatic poetry. His connexion with the *Anti-Jacobin*, which followed, carried him into the first political circles of the town, and his efforts in the cause were rewarded by the appointments of paymaster of the Band of Gentleman Pensioners, and a double Commissioner of the Lottery. On the setting up of the "Quarterly Review," in 1809, the man who had placed him in the editorial chair of the *Anti-Jacobin* pointed him out as the fittest conductor of the new Tory organ, and he at once became its editor.

Gifford died on the 31st of December, 1826, at No. 6, James-street, Buckingham-gate, leaving personal property sworn under the value of 20,000*l.*, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The manner in which he disposed of his property was creditable to his feelings: he left the bulk of it to the son of his benefactor, Cookesley; a sum of money to be annually distributed among the poor of his native place, who had sympathised with him so generously in the hour of his need; and two scholarships to Exeter College, which had received him into its arms. These are not the acts of an arrogant or overbearing man, as he has been sometimes represented: may it not be that his enemies hated him because he, a poor sailor boy and a shoemaker's apprentice, had come to be so enthusiastic an advocate of the aristocracy and the institutions of the country, and were not at all delicate in the motives they attributed to him? His friends believed he acted from conviction and a conscientious principle, and we are acquainted with no act of his life which forbids the more charitable supposition.

Some confusion has arisen in consequence of a publication of a similar name—the "Anti-Jacobin Review"—having come out about the same time, edited by a party who assumed the name of Gifford, and who had started, in 1796, a morning and an evening paper. This erratic genius, the author of the partisan "Life of Pitt," and by real name John Richard Green, was born in 1758, and educated at Oxford, where he distinguished himself more by his excesses than his application to study; and, coming into a large property soon afterwards, he plunged into a course of extravagance that ended in his flight to France, in 1782, and his assuming the name of Gifford to conceal himself from his creditors. In 1788 he ventured back to England, and commenced supporting ministers in a series of able but intemperate pamphlets, and, under the pseudonym of "Humphrey Hedgehog," falling foul of "Peter Porcupine."

He died a magistrate of Worship-street police-court, on the 6th of March, 1818,* at Bromley, in Kent. He was at one time editor of the *True Briton.*

In 1794, the *Morning Advertiser* was established by the Licensed Victuallers of London, its profits to be devoted to the maintenance of their asylum. Of course it soon acquired a large circulation, and speedily sucked the nourishment from some of the other *Advertisers,* which sickened and died. Its first number was published on the 8th of February, 1794. Among its editors it has numbered Dr. Sheridan, and Mr. James Grant, author of "Random Recollections" of the Houses of Lords and Commons, who came to its helm some few years ago from being second in command of *Bell's Life in London,* under George Dowling.

The government now made one more vigorous effort to restrain the newspapers within narrower bounds of discussion, and to check that freedom of expression which in some instances was running into licentiousness, and in all was no doubt embarrassing to a policy which, of necessity, required to be unimpeached and in fact cordially supported by the press, more than that of any other government or period. In that trying crisis, when a spark from a firebrand newspaper might have set England in a blaze, we must make allowance for Pitt if he regarded with jealousy any line that could be construed into a jacobin or republican meaning, and if, in a perhaps exaggerated apprehension of the results of a too great publicity being given to England's policy, he attempted to secure for it a greater degree of secrecy than it required. Moreover, he was strongly backed up by parliament to the principle that the newspapers had no right to know or to publish anything more than the government chose, and as for the people, as yet they were callous on the subject. The temper on which he could rely to support him in any encroachments

* Cunningham's "Lives of Eminent and Illustrious Englishmen," vol. viii. p. 192.

which he might think it necessary to make upon the liberty of the press, is displayed in the violent language used by some noble lords in speaking of the *Morning Chronicle*, and the false and slanderous remarks applied to its editor. On the 21st of March, 1798, the Earl of Minto directed the attention of the House of Lords to a paragraph which had appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 19th, which he pretended displayed a leaning towards France—an insinuation which is followed out *ad absurdum* by Gifford, in his "Life of Pitt," by a charge against Perry of being in the pay of our enemies—a charge against which every one who has heard or read Perry's character revolts with disgust, only wondering and deploring that the bitterness of public feeling should degrade men, otherwise honest and generous, into the commission of paltry falsehood to blacken the character of an antagonist. Lord Sydney characterised the *Chronicle* as "a scandalous paper, which he would not admit into his house;" but Perry was defended by the Earl of Derby and the Duke of Bedford. The Earl manfully asserts that Perry "never employed either his pen or his paper to undermine the civil or religious establishments of the country; the *Morning Chronicle* was distinguished for its regard to the decencies of private life, and by its disdain of all scandal on individuals and of those licentious personalities by which the peace of families was destroyed." The Duke of Bedford insisted on Perry's inviolate attachment to the British constitution, and the Marquis of Lansdowne and the Duke of Norfolk also testified to Perry's respectability. William, Lord Melbourne, might also have got up and said that *he* did not disdain to write in the *Chronicle*. The Earl of Minto, however, moved that Lambert, the printer, and Perry, the proprietor, of the *Morning Chronicle* were guilty of a high breach of privilege, for which they should each pay a fine of 50*l*., and be imprisoned for three months. The Duke of Bedford attempted to get the term of imprisonment reduced to one month, but his

amendment was negatived by sixty-nine votes to eleven; and Lord Minto's motion being carried, Lambert and Perry were accordingly committed to Newgate.*

But the case which gave Pitt his strongest excuse for passing the Newspaper Act of 1798, was that of the *Courier*, which had stated that the French prisoners at Liverpool had been treated with undue severity by the Government. For this assertion the Attorney-general was instructed to prosecute the paper; but he asserted that, not being able to trace the actual writer, and not wishing to punish the printer, who was "a nonentity," or the registered proprietor, who had sold his property in the paper twelve months before, he could make no one answerable for this accusation. Why did this sudden tenderness for the printer arise in the usually immovable heart of the Attorney-general? why this sudden sense of justice visit his usually expansive conscience? He came to ask the House for extended powers—he was going to propose a bill for fixing more completely the responsibility of newspaper writers and proprietors; and on the 4th of April he submitted his "bill for preventing the mischiefs arising from newspapers being printed and published by persons unknown, and for regulating them in other respects." It required that the proprietor, or, if there were more than one, then the two largest proprietors, and the printers, of all newspapers should register their names and addresses at the stamp-office, in a book which should be held in any court of justice ample evidence of their being the proprietors and printers of the papers so registered; and also that one copy of each and every publication should be sent to the stamp-office, to be received at any time as proof of publication. There were other minor provisions, but these were the leading features. In bringing forward the bill, the Attorney-general made a remarkable statement to

* Gifford's "Life of Pitt," vol. iii. p. 151, and "Parliamentary History," vol. xxxiii.

the effect that a parcel of unstamped newspapers had been found in a neutral vessel bound for France, and which papers "contained information, which, if any one had written and sent in another form to the enemy, he would have committed the highest crime of which a man can be guilty." In one of them was a letter which noticed the intended departure of the West India fleet, under the inadequate convoy of two frigates, and at the same time expressing great anxiety about the safety of the fleet. In another article it was stated, that as the people of England were about to be raised in a mass, the French would not be such fools as to invade this country, but would go to Ireland. Newspapers, as the Attorney-general pointed out, being thus artfully made "the means of committing high treason with impunity." Now, admitting to the full the amount of inconvenience which may arise by too great and free a publicity being given by the newspapers to the preparations or the plans of a country in a state of war, we cannot take it for granted that the publication of such information is necessarily intended for the use of the enemy. We are not sure that it is for the service of the country that everything should be made public by the newspapers at such times, but we cannot acquiesce in giving to what may possibly be imprudence and indiscretion the terrible name of treason. But, then, the Attorney-general had his bill to get through, and the old bugbear of the period, always ready for production to frighten minorities into acquiescence—the French—was again brought forward. Sheridan was the first to get up in defence of the press. His speech is but meagrely reported; but he saw, lurking in the bill, something more than the beginning of a system to restrain the press. Mr. Tierney followed: "He foresaw what would be its consequence to the liberty of the press; the clog it would create to talent and literature; the restraint it would be on political freedom; prosecutions on prosecutions would be

pursued, till every spark of public spirit would be lost." He added, that he was commissioned by the editor of the *Courier* to declare that at the time he published the paragraph which had given offence he believed it to be true. Hereupon a scene ensued: Lord Temple rose in a passion, and called upon Tierney to divulge the name of the editor, since he appeared to know him, describing the *Courier* as "a scandalous outrage on law, morality, religion, and justice. It was the echo of France, and propagated with unyielding industry the monstrous misrepresentations of the French Directory and their detestable principles." He called, therefore, upon Tierney to "give such information as would bring SUCH A SCOUNDREL to justice." Tierney boldly stood by his friend the editor. He questioned Temple's right to make such a demand; at all events, he "would not turn common informer and divulge the editor's name. The editor was a man of respectability; and though he, Lord Temple, took the liberty in that House of calling a man a scoundrel who had not the means of answering him, he would not, perhaps, have ventured to say so before him." Hobhouse opposed the bill, seeing in it "an exclusion of public discussion;" and Lord William Russell declared the bill to be "an insidious blow at the liberty of the press." Sir W. Pulteney closed the debate for the day, and maintained that "the liberty of the press was of such a sacred nature that we ought to suffer many inconveniences rather than check its influence in such a manner as to endanger our liberties; for he had no hesitation in saying that without the liberty of the press the freedom of this country would be a mere shadow." The debate was resumed on the 13th of June, when the third reading of the bill was proposed, and Jekyll, in opposing it, declared that "the censorial power of the press was the greatest guardian of British liberty." Sir Francis Burdett spoke long and forcibly against the bill, with a tinge, here and there, of the extreme views he held at that time: "The liberty of the

press is of so delicate a nature, and so important for the preservation of that small portion of liberty which still remains to the country, that I cannot allow the bill to pass without giving it my opposition." . . . . "Sir, a good government, a free government, has nothing to apprehend and everything to hope from the liberty of the press; it reflects a lustre upon all its actions, and fosters every virtue. But despotism courts shade and obscurity, and dreads the scrutinizing eye of liberty—the freedom of the press—which pries into its secret recesses, discovering it in its lurking holes, and drags it forth to public detestation. Sir, if a tyrannically-disposed prince, supported by an unprincipled, profligate minister, backed by a notoriously corrupt parliament, was to cast about for means to secure such a triple tyranny, I know of no means he could devise so effectual for that purpose as the bill now upon your table. Sir, that great man with whom the minister seems to be condemned to form a striking and everlasting contrast—his father—when pressed by the sycophants of power of his time to allow a measure of this nature to be brought into parliament under his administration; when urged to it on the score of suppressing the calumnies which he was told issued from the press against his own reputation, 'No,' said he, with a dignity of soul that characterised the man, 'the press, like the air, is a chartered libertine.'" Wilberforce, "with anguish of mind," felt shocked at the language used by the honourable baronet, and spoke in favour of the bill, as did Ryder; and it became the law of the land,* receiving the royal sanction in the same month.†

It was particularly directed to the enforcement of the Stamp Act, and provided heavy penalties against every one who attempted to evade it, even to the having in possession or lending a copy of an unstamped newspaper. The twentieth section decreed that "every person who

* Parliamentary History, vol. xxxiii. pp. 1418-82.

† 38 George III. cap. 78.

shall knowingly and wilfully retain or keep in custody any newspaper not duly stamped, shall forfeit twenty pounds for each such unstamped newspaper he shall so have in custody." The twenty-first clause declares that "Every person who shall knowingly or wilfully, directly or indirectly, send or carry, or endeavour to send or carry, or cause to be sent, &c., or do any act towards sending, &c., or with intent to send or carry out of Great Britain, any unstamped newspaper, shall forfeit one hundred pounds." But the next clause goes still farther, and prohibits the exportation of any newspaper whatever to any country with which we might be at war: "Every person during the present war who shall send any newspaper out of Great Britain into any country not in amity with his majesty, shall forfeit five hundred pounds." *

Such were the stringent regulations which an exaggerated, if not imaginary, evil, gave the minister an excuse to propose, and the House of Commons a pretext for passing.

* Tyrwhitt and Tyndall's "Digest of the Public General Statutes," vol. i. p. 523.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DOG WHO HAD GOT AN ILL NAME—LORD KENYON, AND HIS ANTIPATHY TO THE PRESS—INSTANCES OF ITS DISPLAY—DREADFUL LIBEL ON THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA—THE "COURIER" IN TROUBLE—THE HARD CASE OF BENJAMIN FLOWER—THE "TRUE BRITON" AND THE "COURIER"—AN ENLIGHTENED JUDGE—BREACH OF PRIVILEGE!—THE "SUN" PUBLICLY BURNT—"STRANGERS MUST WITHDRAW"—CLAPTRAP—INCH BY INCH LEGISLATION—WILLIAM COBBETT AND THE "PORCUPINE"—THE "MAN OF ARDENT MIND" SPEAKS OUT—THOMAS CAMPBELL—HIS OPINION OF PERRY—HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE "MORNING CHRONICLE" AND THE "STAR"—PROFESSOR PORSON—CAPTAIN MCDONALD—MANNERS OF THE "SATIRIST."

THE houses of Parliament had, as we have had too frequent occasion to observe, always displayed an insolent and defiant tone to the newspapers, encouraged no doubt by the servile apologies which it then extorted. They had begun by adopting the bullying and brutal style of Scroggs and Jefferies, but that position could be maintained no longer, and they now simply indulged in contemptuous sneers or depreciating remarks. A newspaper writer who invaded the supposed privileges of Parliament, and was the subject of discussion in consequence, was not yet a "gentleman of the press," but "this man," or, at best, "this person." He was "disaffected" if he breathed a word against the government; he was "endeavouring to alienate the affections of his majesty's lieges" if he expressed the sentiments of the party not in power. He was, on the slightest provocation, declared to be "a scandalous and seditious libeller,"—all of which epithets the meek writer accepted with the greatest humility and bowed his head. He "acknowledged the magnitude of

his offence;" he declared the privileges of the honourable House to be undoubted and a part of the constitution of the country; he appealed to their well-known forbearance, and cried for mercy; he went down on his knees, received in a meek spirit the reprimand of the Speaker, paid the fees of the usher of the black rod or the serjeant-at-arms, and went away rejoicing. He knew neither his position nor his power.

The courts of law vied with the Houses of Parliament in treating the press with marked disrespect; and there was a man on the bench who made himself famous only for the hostility which he evinced towards all the newspaper writers or printers who were tried before him. This was Lord Kenyon, who, coming from the small squirearchy, could have had no aristocratic bias to induce him to adopt the tone and temper of the House to which he found himself exalted. On the bench, and in his seat in the House of Peers, the voice of the yeoman's son was ever against the press. On a criminal information tried in 1799, Rex *v.* Walter, for a libel in the *Times* against Lord Cowper, he scatters to the winds (legally enough) the plea that the defendant was absent in the country, and exercised no control over the paper; but defendants *have* been since excused on such a plea.*

On the 4th of March, 1799, a remarkable trial came on before this biassed judge, at the Guildhall, London, in which John Vint, the printer, George Ross, the publisher, and John Parry, the proprietor of the *Courier*, were criminally indicted before a special jury on an *ex officio* information by the Attorney-general, for a libel on Paul, Emperor of Russia. We will give our readers an opportunity of judging of the nature of the libel, by quoting it as we find it in the *Courier* of November 1st, 1798.

"The Emperor of Russia is rendering himself obnoxious to his subjects by various acts of tyranny, and ridiculous in

* Espinasse's "Reports of Cases at Nisi Prius," vol. i. p. 21.

the eyes of Europe by his inconsistency. He has now passed an edict prohibiting the exportation of timber, deal, &c. In consequence of this ill-timed law, upwards of one hundred sail of vessels are likely to return to this kingdom without freights."

This paragraph, which emanated from the Russia Company, was copied from the *Caledonian Mercury*, and was in error, inasmuch as the emperor had made a relaxation of the edict in favour of this country. The Attorney-general (Scott, afterwards Lord Eldon) dwelt, as advocates have always assumed the right to do, in an exaggerated strain upon the vindictiveness of the writer and the serious mischief which the libel might produce; and, after a powerful appeal in favour of the defendants by Erskine, Lord Kenyon summed up at some length, declaring his opinion that the paragraph was "a gross libel," and the jury accordingly found all the defendants guilty. Parry was sentenced to six months' imprisonment in the King's Bench, to pay a fine of 100*l.*, and to give security for five years, himself in 500*l.* and two sureties in 250*l.* each; and Vint and Ross were each sentenced to be imprisoned for one month in the same prison. Another case tried before Kenyon was that of the Lady Elizabeth Lambert, through the Countess Dowager of Cavan, her mother, as her *prochaine amie*, against the *Morning Post*, then owned by Tattersall, for a libel in asserting that her ladyship had made a *faux pas* with a gentleman of the shoulder-knot. The damages awarded against the *Post* were four thousand pounds.*

This is a glance at Lord Kenyon in Guildhall. We will now see how he follows up a printer from the House of Lords to his own court of King's Bench.

On May 2d, 1799, Benjamin Flower, printer of the *Cambridge Intelligencer*, was waited on by Mr. Finch, deputy-serjeant-at-arms of the House of Lords, with an intimation that he must return with him at once, and in

* Lord Campbell's "Lives of the Chief Justices," vol. iii. pp. 50, 51.

custody, to London, to answer a complaint made to the House of a breach of privilege in the publication, on the 20th of April, of some remarks considered disrespectful to Watson, Bishop of Llandaff. He was accordingly brought to town, on the very day when he published his paper, and lodged for the night in a sheriff's sponging-house in Chancery-lane, where, he tells us, he had to pay seven shillings and sixpence for his night's lodging. Next day he was examined before the House of Lords, and tendered a full apology; but Lord Grenville, who had taken up the matter at first without the knowledge of Bishop Watson, who was absent from town,* moved, and Lord Kenyon seconded, a proposition that he should pay a fine of 100*l.*, and be imprisoned for six months in Newgate; a resolution which, in spite of an eloquent speech of Lord Holland,† was carried. On June 6th, Mr. Clifford appealed to the Court of King's Bench, on behalf of Flower, against the commitment to Newgate, as illegal upon several grounds, the principal being that he had not been proved guilty of a libel, and that he had had no opportunity of defending himself against the charge—obviously meaning before a jury. Lord Kenyon, who seconded the motion for the commitment in the House of Lords, was now the judge on the bench to decide its legality! He made personally offensive and insolent remarks to Mr. Clifford, alluding, by a side blow, to the cabal of Charles the Second's reign, in which one of Clifford's ancestors took a part; declaring that he had no intention of clearing his clients, knowing it to be impossible, but only came there obstructively; and at last breaks out, "Another part of the affidavit is also false—that he was not put upon his defence. I happened to be one of his judges; I was in the House of Lords at the time and heard him make a very long defence. File your affidavit, Sir, that your

* Anecdotes of the Life of Bishop Watson, vol. ii. p. 89.

† Parliamentary Register.

client may be prosecuted; *you shall take nothing by your motion.*" *

He of course ruled against the application, and Judge Grose concurring, the printer was remanded back to Newgate.

Kenyon could be fair enough when the question before him was one of contention between two newspapers only. In Hilary Term, 1796, he had had occasion to lay down the law in a case in which the interests of the press were involved, and to declare how far a newspaper was protected against the injurious slanders of another paper. The action was brought by Heriot, the proprietor of the *True Briton*, against Stuart of the *Courier*, for a libel contained in an article denouncing the *True Briton* as "the most vulgar, ignorant, and scurrilous journal ever published in Great Britain," and then proceeding to state, that "it is the lowest now in circulation, and we submit the fact to the consideration of advertisers." The judge ruled that the first part of the libel was not actionable, as it did not exceed the bounds of fair comment (but we doubt whether he would have so ruled had the words been applied to a public character); but that the second part was, inasmuch as it tended to injure the commercial interests of the paper.†

But a contemporary judge, in the same year, gave a judgment in an enlightened and liberal spirit, so far in advance of the age that it must have startled his companions on the bench. It is the first time that the great principle, to which we are indebted in a great degree for the just and temperate administration of our laws, was enunciated from authority,—a principle which had yet, in after years, its opposition to encounter, before it became recognised as the spirit of the laws. In Easter Term,

* State Trials, vol. xxvii. p. 1006.

† Petersdoff's "Abridgment of Cases," vol. xii. p. 173. Espinasse's "Reports of Cases at Nisi Prius," vol. i. p. 437.

1796, before the Court of Common Pleas, an action was tried between Curry and Lawson for a libel. The alleged libel consisted in a simple report of proceedings in a Court of Justice. It was not pretended that it was otherwise than a fair, correct, and impartial report of what actually took place, without a word of comment or remark; and Chief Justice Eyre declared, that although the report might be very injurious to the plaintiff's character, yet, "being a true account of what took place in a Court of Justice which was open to all the world, the publication of it was not unlawful," and the jury, under his direction, gave a verdict for the newspaper.*

Another judge gave a token of advanced views which should not be passed over.

In 1796, Parker, the printer of the *General Advertiser*, was committed to Newgate by order of the House of Lords for a breach of its privileges, but on the prorogation of parliament he applied to Judge Buller, on a writ of *habeas corpus*, for his discharge, which that judge ordered, ruling that the House had no power to commit for a period beyond the duration of its session.

The Irish House of Commons followed in the wake of the English parliament, and in this year ordered the *Sun*, London newspaper, to be burnt for "a gross and scandalous libel" reflecting on its proceedings. †

The spirit displayed by the legislature was so distasteful to the public, who were heard murmuring against the persecution of their newspapers by a power which usurped the place of a jury and was occasionally so stanchly backed by a judge—a power which threatened to erect itself into a new Star-chamber—these arbitrary proceedings were getting so frequent, and giving so much dissatisfaction, that a still more objectionable element was now infused in them, and every pains was taken to shroud them in silence. On the

* Petersdoff's "Abridgment of Cases," vol. xii. p. 181.

† Plowden's "History of Ireland," p. 920.

6th of June, Lord Carlisle complained to the House of Lords of some remarks which had appeared in the *Times* upon the Divorce Bill, and on the 10th he made a motion on the subject, which fell to the ground. What that motion was we are prevented from knowing, for on both occasions strangers were ordered to withdraw at the beginning of the discussion, and, on the last one, "as soon as the Lord Chancellor came to the House, strangers were ordered to withdraw; and so strictly was the order enforced that, soon after their Lordships had proceeded to business, the very lobbies were directed to be cleared."* The reporter (Woodfall) adds in a note: "A noble Lord, high in office, intimated on this occasion, that, should any publication be made of the proceedings, he would move a very exemplary punishment against the editor, printer, and proprietor of the work wherein they should be inserted."

The very next month, on July 23d, the *Times* again fell under the censure of the House of Lords, on a complaint of a misrepresentation of what Earl Stanhope had said of Mr. Garrow, as counsel at the bar, on the Flour Company's Bill. On July 28th, C. Bell, the printer, and J. Bonsor, the publisher, attended at the bar, according to order, and, after making an ample apology and being reprimanded on their knees, were discharged.†

Each party availed itself of this assumed power when it suited its purpose. The Whigs were as boisterous about the "licentiousness" of a Tory paper as they were clamorous for the "liberties" of their own organs. Men like Canning, Windham—even Sheridan, supported motions for punishing newspaper printers on the opposite interest—Sir Francis Burdett winced when a Tory paper stung him, and called upon the House to throw the shield of its privileges around him,—and all of them made, as a matter of course, a great preliminary fuss about the intense respect they had

* Parliamentary Register, vol. xii. 1800, p. 79.

† Ibid. p. 478—590.

for the liberty of the press—that on it our constitution was built—that they had always been most jealous of any attempts to restrain it—that they would lay down their lives in its defence, and so on; BUT that this particular article was so gross, so scandalous, so malicious a libel, that in justice to that very liberty which they were ever so anxious to strengthen and consolidate, they must invoke the heaviest punishment upon the author; the article, very likely, being as milk and water compared with what we read every day in the *Times* or *Daily News*.

With the close of the century came a gracious concession to the press from Parliament; and the Act [39th and 40th George III. allows, in its seventy-second chapter, the increase in the size of each newspaper sheet of *two* and a half inches—that is to say, that a demy sheet of thirty and a half inches by twenty would in future be allowed to pass through the Stamp-office, instead of being confined to the old dimensions of twenty-eight by twenty. Thus, literally, "inch by inch" has the newspaper fought its way to its present dimensions.

With the end of the century also was born a daily paper, which was certainly not the servile organ it has been represented, but, with bold voice and sound sentiment, raised a cry that was heard on the other side of the Atlantic, and silenced the ravings of a mad set of politicians—the *Porcupine* of William Cobbett. In 1792, Cobbett had published some periodical political publications, under the signature of "Peter Porcupine," at Philadelphia; and, on his return to England, eight years later, disappointed by the working and disgusted with the excesses of republicanism in America and France, he designed a paper to expose the fallacies of the new political dogmas, to check the spread of infidelity which was the offspring of a wild and easy way of thinking in politics and religion, and to afford an independent support to the ministry of Pitt. In the prospectus of the *Porcupine*, which is dated from "Pall Mall, 29th Septem-

ber, 1800," Cobbett boldly declares the mission of the new paper and his own disgust of the opinions which had spread, like the fashions from France, to the great republic of the West, and, like fashions, were worn (for they can scarcely be said to have been entertained) by the shallow-thinking at home:—

"Those who want experience of the consequences may, for aught I know, be excused for conniving at these attempts; but for me, who have seen acts passed by a Republican legislature more fraudulent than forgery or coining; for me, who have seen Republican officers of state offering their country for sale for a few thousands of dollars; for me, who have seen Republican judges become felons, and felons become Republican judges; for me to hold my hands and tamely to listen to the insolent eulogists of Republican governmen s and rulers, would be a shameful abandonment of principle—a dastardly desertion of duty."*

We cannot echo the strong language in which Mr. Hunt has spoken of the views taken by Cobbett's paper. These were the sentiments of an earnest thinking man, detesting tyranny, whether clothed in the imperial purple or hidden among the tatters of a mob; and his zealous support of Pitt's ministry, when he saw that Pitt wanted support to check the Jacobin epidemic and to fling back anarchy and misrule upon their native shore, was not an "obsequious support of the silver fork school," as Mr. Hunt has described it,† but consistently in character with the determined resistance which he offered when the case was reversed, and the reaction which took place—the rebound of public feeling against the hateful demon anarchy—seemed likely to be turned to advantage by the government in attacking the rational and constitutional liberties of the people. He saw that it was no time to ask for increased liberty when a spirit was abroad for license—he had the

* Prospectus of a new Daily Paper, to be called the *Porcupine*, p. 2.

† Fourth Estate, vol. ii. p. 46.

good hard sense to discover, and the honest courage to declare, that restraint (which, but for the dangerous state of affairs, was not at all compatible with his political creed) was necessary *now*—and when Mr. Pitt was striving to shut the floodgates against the stream of infidelity and disaffection which was pouring into the country, he lent his strong arm, like a good Englishman and real patriot, to the work. At such a time, and in the face of such dangers, would Mr. Hunt have had him in his hearty way declaring that the government was tyrannical and bad? Mr. Adam, who on one occasion acted as his counsel, described him as a man "of ardent mind." This was no doubt true, and very often the ardent mind led him into excess and vituperation; even in the Prospectus of the *Porcupine*, we have an amusing tirade which shows how little he tried to check the expression of his opinions:—

"The intrigues of the French—the servile, the insidious, the insinuating French—shall be an object of my constant attention. Whether at war or at peace with us, they still dread the power, envy the happiness, and thirst for the ruin of England. Collectively and individually, the whole and every one of them hate us! Had they the means, they would exterminate us to the last man; they would snatch the crutch from our parents, the cradle from our children, and our happy country itself would they sink beneath those waves on which they now flee from the thunder of our cannon. When we shall sheath the sword, it is for our sovereign to say; but while we retain one drop of true British blood in our veins, we never shall shake hands with this perfidious and sanguinary race, much less shall we make a compromise with their monkey-like manners and tiger-like principles."*

The first number of the new paper appeared on the 24th of November, 1800,† and there was so much talent

* Prospectus of the *Porcupine*, p. 3.

† Timperley, in his "Dictionary of Printers and Printing," gives the date of its appearance as 1801, but this is an error.

displayed in it, that the *Porcupine* at once commanded the ear of the country, and, of one article in particular, Mr. Windham declared that the author deserved a statue of gold. The *Porcupine*, however, died, when the excitement which had called it into existence ceased; and, when all danger was over, Cobbett was as warm an advocate for the restraint of the over-stretched power of the government as he had been for curbing the licentiousness of the mob; and, from the ashes of the *Porcupine*, sprang up the *Political Register*, of which and of its author we shall have to speak again in due course.

But we may as well pause here, and look back and see whence this man comes, and who and what he is. William Cobbett, then, was the son of a small farmer at Farnham in Surrey, where he was born on the 9th of March, 1766, and was employed as little farmers' sons then were, scaring crows at first, and working with the farm labourers as he got older. His father taught the family to read and write, in an humble, unpretending way. But William's spirit rebelled against the monotony of his pursuits, and, whilst on a short visit to Portsmouth, he endeavoured to get entered on board a ship, but the captain, suspecting that he had run away from his parents or his master, refused to receive him; so he rambled off to London, and engaged himself as copying clerk to an attorney at Gray's Inn. This was not the employment to suit him, and, after about eight or nine months of it, he grew tired, and enlisted at Chatham in a regiment which was under orders for Nova Scotia. Whilst waiting at the dépôt, he studied to qualify himself for his new career with so much diligence, that he was promoted to the rank of sergeant before he sailed. His regiment remained for six years in New Brunswick, where his course of life has been left upon record by himself. He rose at four o'clock, dressed, prepared everything for appearing on parade, even to the laying his sword on the table, ready to be buckled on as soon as the bugle sounded, and then gave himself up to study. His industry was

rewarded, for at the end of the six years he was Sergeant-Major. In 1791, he returned to England with excellent testimonials from Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and on his own solicitation obtained his discharge. He married in the next year, and in March set out for France, whence he went to New York and Philadelphia. The friends of Republican France were at that time triumphant in America, and on all sides of him Cobbett heard the grossest abuse lavished upon England. But he loved his country too well to endure this in silence, and he boldly replied to the traducers of his country under the name of "Peter Porcupine." He also opened a shop in the centre of the enemy's camp, where he published and sold his manifestoes, as well as other loyal tracts and pamphlets; till, having satirized Dr. Rust too severely, he was cast in damages, in an action which the Doctor brought against him, for five thousand dollars, which so much disgusted Cobbett that he determined to return to that country which he loved so well and had defended so generously, and where freedom, if less noisy, is more real; and accordingly, in June, 1800, we find him again in England raising an honest voice against republicans and sham patriots, whether French or American.

Thomas Campbell, the poet, became associated with the newspaper press in this year, as a young man of twenty-three. His first connexion was with Perry and the *Morning Chronicle*, for which he wrote political pieces, some of which are preserved among his collected works. The first contribution appeared in the latter part of the year 1800, and was entitled "Lines on Visiting a Scene in Argyllshire," and this was followed by "The Beech Tree's Petition;" the "Exile of Erin," appearing on the 28th, and the "Ode to Winter," on the 30th of January, in the next year, about which time "Ye Mariners of England" also appeared. He was paid by Perry pretty liberally as times went. He writes to his friend Richardson, under date December 16th, 1800, "I have stuff for Perry; I

expect you to be the bearer of thirty pounds from him."* And, again, with a dash of the vanity and flippancy of a young and aspiring poet, he writes to the same friend on Christmas-day, "I have just finished my fourteenth transmission to P——. I have resolved to send but twenty for a year's allowance. I think you may demand at least forty guineas for them all; the remaining six shall be sent within three weeks. Two guineas apiece is no extraordinary demand, but leave it to himself. *More than twenty pieces in a year would make my name too hackneyed.*" He bears enthusiastic testimony, in common with every one who came into business or friendly contact with the proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, to the worth of Perry. Writing to his friend Richardson on March 13th, 1801, he says, "You will be acquainted with Perry also, and must like and admire him. His wife is an angel, and his niece a goddess." Perry appears to have behaved to him with his usual liberality, although it was soon apparent that he was unfitted for the political department of the paper, and consequently confined himself to the contribution of poetry. In 1804 we find him engaged on the *Star* newspaper, but in what capacity we are not told, at a salary of four guineas a-week.† Although Mr. Knight Hunt states that Campbell was at first employed as a reporter on the press, we have been told by some of his newspaper contemporaries that he never filled any such capacity; nor does the peculiar bent of his genius, or his general temperament, seem to have been at all likely to have enabled him to perform any such work.

We have strong reason to believe that the classical but ever-thirsty Porson about this time contributed to Perry's paper, for he had married that gentleman's sister in 1795; and, although we have no means of fastening any of the

* "Life and Correspondence of Thomas Campbell," by Dr. Beattie, vol. i. p. 323.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 20.

papers in the *Morning Chronicle* upon him, it has always been stated that the alliance brought his assistance to its columns.*

The *Morning Herald*, at this time, was under the editorship of Captain McDonald; and a strong anti-ministerial paper, called the *Satirist*, was edited by a barrister named Manners, who was afterwards silenced with a consulship at Boston.

* Barker's "Anecdotes of Porson," &c. vol. ii. p. 81.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PROVINCIAL PRESS—THE TRAVELLING PRESS OF THE CIVIL WARS—THE FIRST COUNTRY NEWSPAPER—THE EARLY COUNTRY JOURNALS—STAMFORD—NORWICH—WORCESTER—SALISBURY—YORK—EXETER—LEEDS—GLOUCESTER—MANCHESTER, ETC.—TROUBLES OF COUNTRY EDITORS IN THE LAST CENTURY—THE FIRST LEADING ARTICLE.

HAVING kept our eyes so long upon the London press, and watched it through perils and persecution, through the troubles of the Civil Wars, the trials of the Restoration, the temptations of the Walpole times, and the terrors of the French Revolution; still on its march, advanced or impeded by circumstances, but never stopped; having watched it in its onward course till we have seen begotten the papers which we read to-day,—we will go into the provinces and inquire how the newspaper has flourished away from the intelligence, the wealth, the excitement, and the business of great London.

The first papers published in the provinces were not, strictly speaking, the progenitors of the provincial press—they were birds of passage, which perhaps dropped the seed as they flew across the country from which the country newspaper has issued: but they were in no way identified with the place at which they were published; in fact, they were not local organs, but the reports of the contending armies during the civil wars, issued from a travelling press just wherever the army to which they were attached might happen to halt, or whenever the head of it had occasion to communicate anything to the public. Thus, in 1639, Robert Barker, the king's printer, published a few

numbers of a paper at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and for some time from January 1st, 1642, the *Mercurius Aulicus*, of Birkenhead, was printed "by H. Hall, for W. Webb, bookseller, near to Queen's College, Oxford." In 1644 the *Mercurius Hibernicus* was printed at Bristol. In fact, the press was here to-day and there to-morrow throughout the civil wars. But when the struggle was over, all was dark and silent in the provinces; no Mercury flew from town to town; no Diurnal, Post, Messenger, or Intelligencer carried news among the villages; the brief political busy life was over, and the country was silent as the tomb. It was not until 1695 (as far as our researches have discovered) that a really local organ of information—what can be fairly considered as a country newspaper—made its appearance, and that paper was the *Lincoln, Rutland, and Stamford Mercury*. We look in vain over a waste of ten years, but find no town following the example of Stamford in setting up a press of its own till 1706, when the *Norwich Postman* first appeared in small quarto size, "printed by S. Sheffield for J. Goddard, bookseller, Norwich," the price being "a penny, but a halfpenny not refused." The newspaper soon struck root and fructified in Norwich. After the passing of the Stamp Act came forth the *Norwich Courant, or Weekly Packet*, in 1714, price three-halfpence, of which Cave had the management for Collins his master; in 1721, the *Weekly Mercury, or Protestant's Packet*, at the same price; closely followed by the *Norwich Gazette, or Henry Crossgrove's News;* and, in 1723, by the *Norwich Journal*. These Norwich papers were curiosities in their way. In 1723, Crossgrove raised the price of his paper, and thus announced the advance to his readers:—"This is to inform my friends that on Saturday next this newspaper will be sold at a penny, and continue at that price. The reason of my raising to a penny is because I cannot afford to sell it under any longer, and I hope none of my customers will think it dear at a penny, since they shall

always have the first intelligence, besides other diversions." And we have before us a Norwich paper containing a coarse woodcut representing a man riding towards a gallows with the devil in pursuit, this being considered a likely way of calling public attention to an advertisement of a stolen horse. The often-quoted advertisement of a chandler for a journeyman "who has had the small-pox," is in one of these Norwich papers.*

No doubt other towns were now sending out newspapers which have left no trace behind them; but we still have, in a green old age, *Burrows' Worcester Journal,* started in June, 1709. Salisbury soon had its *Postman,* started September 27th, 1715, and York its *Mercury,* a very small quarto, printed by Grace White, widow, in Coffee-yard, York, changed in 1728 to the *Courant,*† as it has continued to be to this day. The prospectus of the *Salisbury Postman* has been preserved, and is as follows:—

"The *Salisbury Postman, or Pacquet of Intelligence* from France, Spaine, Portugal, &c., Saturday, September 27th, 1715, No. 1.

"*** This paper contains an abstract of the most material occurrences of the whole week, foreign and domestick, and will be continued every post, provided a sufficient number will subscribe for its encouragement.

"If two hundred subscribe, it shall be delivered to any public or private house in town, every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday morning, by eight of the clock during the winter season, and by six in the Summer, for three-halfpence each.

"Any person in the countrie may order it by the post coach, carrier, or market people, to whom they shall be carefully delivered.

* Such advertisements were not at all uncommon; no shopman or apprentice was wanted who had *not* had the then terrible scourge.

† Hargrove's "History of York," vol. ii. pp. 411, 412.

"It shall be always printed in a sheet and a half, and on a good paper; but this, containing the whole week's news, can't be afforded under twopence.

"NOTE.—For encouragement of all those that may have occasion to enter advertisements, this paper will be made publick in every market town, forty miles distant from this city, and several will be sent as far as Exeter.

"Besides the news, we perform all other matters belonging to our art and mystery, whether in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Algebra, Mathematicks, &c.

"Printed by Samuel Farley, at his office, adjoyning to Mr. Robert Silcock's, on the Ditch in Sarum. anno 1715."

Exeter must have been as prolific as Norwich in newspapers; for, in 1718-19, we find the *Exeter Mercury, Protestant Mercury*, and *Postmaster, or Royal Mercury*, all printed in that city, and all in trouble for publishing the reports of parliamentary proceedings. Leeds first boasted a newspaper in the *Leeds Mercury*, started in May, 1720, a paper which the enterprise and talent of Mr. Baines (the Walter of the provincial press) did so much in our own time to make famous. Raikes first gave to Gloucester a *Journal* on April 9th, 1722 (still in existence), and would seem to have launched it with spirit, for he secured for it the services of Cave, who sent him the proceedings of parliament, which brought him into collision with the House of Commons in 1728. Manchester was destitute of a newspaper till 1730, when the *Manchester Gazette* (a title afterwards changed to *Manchester Magazine*) was started by Mr. Whitforth, and remained without a competitor till 1752, when the *Mercury* appeared. In 1740 the *Oxford Journal* appeared under the editorship of William Jackson, who gained it a character for the boldness of its political remarks; and in 1745 the rebellion of the Young Pretender called into existence at Preston, in Lancashire, a paper called the *British Courant, or Preston Journal.* Mr. Baines, in his "History of Lancashire," seems to have fallen

into error in dating the birth of the Liverpool press, which he fixes at 1756.* The fact is, there was a newspaper in existence in Liverpool in 1712, conducted by one S. Terry. One number is extant; the title and heading run:—"No. 18. The *Liverpoole Courant*, being an abstract of London and other news, from Tuesday, July 15th, to Friday, July 18th, 1712." It contains the announcement of *one* "ship arrived" and one outward bound for Dublin, and *two* advertisements, one from "a governess or female teacher," from London, who, in addition to reading, "also learneth young gentlewomen to mark, work, point, make plain work, flourishing, embroidery, and dressing of heads, after the newest mode, and to the best advantage."† Mr. Baines was no doubt led into mistake by the opening address of Williamson's *Liverpool Advertiser* (May 28th, 1756), in which the writer says, "It hath a long time been matter of surprise to many, that a place so respectable in its inhabitants, so advantageous in its situation, and so important in its commercial concerns as Liverpool, should be without those weekly and public methods of conveying intelligence which are to be found in towns of less considerable note," &c. Now this does not say, as Mr. Baines has inferred from it, that there had been no previous paper—only that there was no other at the time of writing.

These were among the earliest provincial journals, but they were not the only ones. The following newspapers still existing date their foundation in the first half of the last century, besides those we have more particularly mentioned:—

Newcastle Courant, August 11, 1711, by John White, a native of York. ‡

Newcastle Mercury, July, 1722.

* Baines' "History of Lancashire," vol. iv. p. 92.

† Brookes' "Liverpool in the last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century," p. 92.

‡ Mackenzie's "History of Newcastle," vol. ii. p. 727.

Newcastle Journal, April 7, 1739.
Northampton Mercury, May 2, 1720.
Salisbury and Winchester Journal, 1720.
Chester Courant, 1721.
Reading Mercury, February 8, 1723.
Chelmsford Chronicle, about 1730.
Derby Mercury, 1732.
Sherbourne Mercury, 1736.
Hereford Times, 1739.
Ipswich Journal, 1739.
Nottingham Journal, January, 1741.
Aris's Birmingham Gazette, November 16, 1741.
Keene's Bath Journal, 1742.
Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, January, 1744.
Sussex Advertiser, 1745; and
Cambridge Chronicle, May, 1748.*

It was no easy matter, when the publication of parliamentary reports was prohibited, to fill these country papers, small as they were; no such thing as a leading article had yet appeared, and the columns were filled with vapid essays and tales. In 1752, the editor of the *Leicester Journal* was so embarrassed by the want of matter that he commenced reprinting the Bible verbatim, and got as far as the 10th chapter of Exodus, before things temporal furnished him with sufficient matter to fill up his journal. Many of these papers (and among them the one we have just named) were sent up to London to be printed, there being no press in the town which they represented, so that, considering that the post took, for example, two days to travel from Leicester to London and two days to return, and the printing must have occupied a day more, the news must have been nearly a week old when it came out. Up to the establishment of mail coaches, the York newspapers had to send expresses to Grantham to fetch the London news.†

* Mitchell's "Newspaper Press Directory," &c.
† Hargrove's "History of York," vol. ii. p. 261.

It was at Leicester that Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) Philips, the celebrated bookseller of Bridge-street, Blackfriars, and proprietor of the "Monthly Magazine," established a newspaper, the *Leicester Herald*, in 1790, when on his road to London and a fortune.

But the provincial press strode manfully after its older brother, till, towards the close of the century, many country newspapers need not have feared a comparison with the London ones. The introduction of leading articles by Mr. Flower, of the *Cambridge Journal*, during the period of the French Revolution, in which he was soon after copied by Mr. Baines, of the *Leeds Mercury*, led to their general adoption as one of the principal features of the country newspaper, and gave to it the weight and power which it had not enjoyed in a commensurate degree with its London contemporary, although under the influence of circumstances more favourable to their growth. And here we may pause to remark that the title of "leading" articles did not arise from their being the principal articles in the paper, but from their being "leaded," a technical term for the practice of leaving wider spaces between the lines than usual, by placing blank leads between the rows of type.

The *Kentish Gazette* attracted attention by a series of letters, chiefly upon political subjects, under the signature of "Cantianus." These were the productions of the Rev. Edmond Marshall, vicar of Charing, who was at one time honoured with the suspicion of being "Junius." He died on the 5th of May, 1797.

In 1782 the number of papers published in the provinces was fifty; in 1790, sixty; in 1792, seventy; and in 1795, seventy-two. These papers—we are not clearly informed though whether the London journals are not included in the return of stamps and duty—yielded the government a revenue of £118,498 from August, 1791, to August, 1792; and £142,230 3*s*. 7*d*. from August, 1792, to August, 1793.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SCOTTISH PRESS—THE TRAVELLING PRESS IN SCOTLAND—THE FIRST NATIVE NEWSPAPER—THOMAS SYDSERFE—SCOTLAND IN THE DARK—THE "EDINBURGH GAZETTE" AND JAMES DONALDSON—THE "EDINBURGH COURANT" AND ADAM BOIG—SHALL NEWS BE A MONOPOLY?—GREAT STRUGGLE FOR THE EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGE OF PRINTING NEWS—DONALDSON'S PETITIONS—BOIG'S REPLIES—DECISION OF THE LORDS OF THE COUNCIL—BOIG SIGNS THE REMARKABLE TERMS PRESCRIBED—AND THE "COURANT" GOES ON.

THE civil wars were the means of introducing newspapers into Scotland. Spalding, writing from Aberdeen in December, 1642, says, "Now printed papers daily come from London, called 'Diurnal Occurrences, declaring what is done in Parliament;'"* and, after the defeat of Dunbar, Cromwell sent his printer up to Leith, and, "in Hort's Close, opposite the Tron Church," according to Mr. Chambers,† set up the press from which was issued the first newspaper ever printed on the Scottish soil, the *Mercurius Politicus,* which first appeared on October 26th, 1653. It, however, was a mere reprint—intended chiefly for the information of the English troops who had come to garrison Leith—of a paper published in London, under the title of "The Diurnal of some Passages and Affairs." In November, 1654, it was transferred to Edinburgh, where it continued to be published until April 11th, 1660, when it changed its name, in deference to the prevailing fashion "of Mercuries," to *Mercurius Publicus.* But even this print can only be considered as an importation and not a native production; it was first brought out by an invading

* Spalding's "History of the Troubles of Scotland," vol. i. p. 336.

† Edinburgh Journal, July 7th, 1834.

army for a special purpose, and can therefore scarcely be looked upon as the parent of the Scottish press.

The earliest legitimate journal in Scotland appears to have been the *Mercurius Caledonius,* a small weekly quarto, printed by a society of stationers, which was started in Edinburgh, the 31st December, 1660, and was described beneath its title as "Comprising the Affairs in Agitation in Scotland, with a Survey of Foreign Intelligence." Thomas Sydserfe, a son of the Bishop of Orkney, was the editor of this publication—a man whom Chalmers disparagingly describes as imagining "that he had the wit to amuse, the knowledge to instruct, and the address to captivate the lovers of news in Scotland; but he was only able, with all his powers, to extend his publication to ten numbers, which were very loyal, very illiterate, and very affected." On the 28th March, 1661, this paper issued its last number, leaving the field to the *Mercurius Publicus,* which had survived the Restoration, and which continued to filter news from the South, for the edification of the North, till it was superseded by the *Kingdom's Intelligencer,* which is said by Arnot to have run for seven years.*

The Scotch, now distinguished for their craving after information, would then seem to have had little desire for news, and as for politics, they were proscribed. Education was but feebly groping its way in the large towns, and most of the lairds and proprietors gloried in their ignorance. What wonder, then, that they accepted the only paper which it pleased the powers to give to them, and were satisfied with it?—what wonder that a press, trammelled with the chains of the licenser and the censor, but grudgingly allowed to stand in a country where the people themselves cared little for its existence and gained nothing by it, should not send forward a single newspaper? Law which was almost martial, the executive in hands which were arbitrary and to all purposes irresponsible, from the time

* History of Edinburgh.

occupied in communicating with the government in London, and the indifference of the government in London when applied to—in the breath of these, the newspaper press of Scotland, such as it had been, sickened and died. In the year of the Revolution, 1688, there was not a single journal published in the length or breadth of the land, nor do we find a trace of one for the next eleven years—the saddest and most suggestive of the signs of distress which Scotland was silently making—not even a groan from the wounded spirit. The *Scots Mercury*, "giving a true account of the daily proceedings and most remarkable occurrences in Scotland"—a paper first issued on May 8th, 1692—has been thought to belong to the Scottish press; but glance at the bottom of the page, and you will see it was printed in London, by R. Baldwin, and probably very few copies found their way beyond the Tweed. The *Scots Scout's Discoveries* (1642); the *Scots Intelligencer, or Weekly News from Scotland and the Court*, and the *Scots Dove* (1643); *Intelligence from the South Borders of Scotland* (1644); *Mercurius Scoticus* (1651); and the *Theme, or Scots Presbiter* (1652), were all printed in London.

In 1699, a paper struggled into existence, but it is wonderful it was not strangled in its birth when we see how it was immediately swaddled up in the bonds of the licenser. In the collection of curious historical documents given to the world by the Maitland Club of Edinburgh, we find the original license for the printing of the *Edinburgh Gazette*, which had been started in February, 1699:—

"Act in favors of James Donaldson, for printing the Gazette, Mar. 10, 1699.

"Anent the petition given to the Lords of his Majesties Privy Councill, by James Donaldson, Merchant in Edinburgh, shewing, That the petitioner doeth humbly conceive the publishing of ane Gazett in this place, Containeing ane abridgement of fforaigne newes, together with the occurrances at home, may be both usefull and satisfieing to the

leidges, and actually hath published one or two to see how it may be liked, and so farr as he could understand, the project was approven of by very many, and therefore Humbly supplicating the said Lords to the Effect after mentioned; the Lords of his Majesties Privy Councill haveing considered this petition given in to them by the above James Donaldsone, They doe hereby Grant full warrand and authority to the petitioner for publishing the above Gazette, and discharges any other persones whatsoever to pen or publish the like under the penaltie of forfaulting all the coppies to the petitioner, and farder payment to him of the soume of ane hundred pounds Scots money, by and altour the forsaid confiscatioun and forfaulture; and Recommends to the Lord high Chancellor to nominat and appoint a particular persone to be Supervisor of the saids Gazetts, before they be exposed to public view, printed, or sold."*

With this gracious but somewhat obscure "warrand" and authority, then, the *Edinburgh Gazette* crept forth, protected from competitors in the bear's hug of the licensers, a modest little folio, having two columns to the page, price one penny, and appearing every Tuesday and Thursday. The first forty numbers were edited by James Watson, the author of the "History of Printing," who seems to have been succeeded by John Reid. But Watson, who was probably galled by the chains he wore in the *Gazette*, was some time after concerned in bringing out another paper in Edinburgh, the authority for printing which is thus accorded:—

"Act in favors of Adam Boig for printing the Edinburgh Currant.

"Anent the petition given in and presented by the Lord high Chancellor and remanent Lords of Privie Councill, by Adam Boig, Humbly shewing, That, whereas their petitioner intends to sett forth a paper by the name of

* Miscellany of the Maitland Club, vol. ii. pp. 232, 233.

Edinburgh Currant which will come out thrice weekly, viz.: Monday, Wednesday, and Fryday, containing most of the remarkable fforreign newes from their prints, and also the home Newes from the ports within this kingdome, when ships comes and goes, and from whence, which its hoped will prove a great advantage to merchants and others within this Nation (it being now altogether neglected), And Seeing their petitioner has no inclination to give offence therby to the Government, and that he cannot safely doe the same without he be impowered therto by their Lordships, and Therfore craving to the effect after mentioned as the said petition bears; The Lords of her Majesties Privie Councill, having considered the above petition given in to them by Adam Boig and samen being read in their presence, The saids Lords do heirby allow and grant warrand to the petitioner to sett furth and print ane paper entituled Edinburgh Currant, containing the remarkable forreign newes from their prints and letters, as also the home newes from the ports within this kingdome, when ships comes and goes, and from whence, he alwayes being answerable for the samen, and for the newes therein specified and sett down."*

This paper, which would appear to be the first to give the desiderated information "when ships comes and goes," came out under the management of Watson, on the 14th February, 1705, price three halfpence. Watson seceded from it on the publication of the fifty-fifth number, and whoever may have been his successor got it and poor Adam Boig into sad trouble, as the following mournful confession and submission will testify:—

"Proceedings in the Cause Adam Boig and James Donaldson.

"To His Grace, Her Majesties High Commissioner and the Right Honourable the Lords of Her Majesties Most Honourable Privy Council, the petition of Adam Boig,

* Miscellany of the Maitland Club, vol. ii. p. 241.

Humbly Sheweth, That your Petitioner having obtained your Lordships liberty and permission for Emitting a Newspaper under the title of the Edinburgh Courant, in which I have carryed ever since with great care, diligence, and caution, to the satisfaction, not only of your Lordships, but of the Leidges in general; until by misfortune upon the 22d and 28th days of June last, your Petitioner being importun'd by Mr. Evander Mc Iver, Tacksman of the Paper Manufactory, to insert an advertisement given in and subscribed by the said Mr. Mc Iver, herewith produced, your Petitioner did most inadvertently suffer the same to be insert in the Courant, which (to your Petitioner's great grief) has given offence to your Grace and Lordships, whereupon your Grace and Lordships have justly stopped the printing and emitting the said Courant, the continuance of which stop will intirely ruine your Petitioner now, after he hath been at great charges in settling Correspondents at home and abroad;

"May it therefore please your Grace and Lordships to accept of your Petitioner's humble and sincere acknowledgment of his fault, and of your Grace and Lordships' goodness to repone your Petitioner to the Printing and Publishing of the Courant as formerly; and, according to my duty, I shall hereafter be more cautious and circumspect, and am most willing that in all time coming no Inland News nor Advertisements shall be published nor put into the Courant, but at the Sight and Allowance of the Clerks of Council."*

A curious discussion now arose as to whether the previous permission granted to Donaldson to publish news was not intended as the right to a monopoly of publication, as indeed it seems to us to have amounted to. That such an idea could have been entertained appears now astonishing, but it caused poor Donaldson much more astonishment to think it could be otherwise. With something as near to a

* Miscellany of the Maitland Club, vol. ii. pp. 248, 249.

reproachful tone as he dare assume, he petitions the High Commissioner and Lords of Council to stop the *Courant*. He urges his loyalty, his poverty, and his harmlessness upon their consideration; he reminds them that, in 1689, he raised a company of horse at his own expense, which not only impoverished him, but caused him to neglect his business, so that he got into debt, "which put your Petitioner to think of all possible means of subsistence," the most likely at last seeming to be the setting up of a newspaper. But just as he fancied he had got the privilege snugly to himself, lo! permission is granted to Adam Boig to do the same thing; and Boig, who appears to have been a more enterprising man, not only gives information when "ships comes and goes," but undersells the *Gazette* after all. "He gave his paper to the Ballad criers 4*s*. a quair below the common price, as he did likewise to the postmaster, who used to take a parcel of Gazettes weekly. This obliged your Petitioner to lower the price of his Gazettes likewise. But the said Adam, and those who assisted him, did still so practice the paper cryers as to neglect the selling of the Gazette, to deny that there was any printed when enquired at, and also to extol Mr. Boig and the Courant, as a paper much preferable to the Gazette, both in respect of foreign and domestick News. Tho'," continues the humble petition of James Donaldson, "such little artifices should seem to merit but little regard, yet, by abstracting the Gazette and the other methods aforesaid, the Courant gain'd credit with some, tho' your Petitioner cannot understand upon what considerations, for all the foreign News that ever was in the Courant were taken verbatim out of some of the London papers, and for the most part from *Dyer's Letter* and the *London Courant*, which are not of the best reputation; so your Petitioner did never omit any domestick News that he judged pertinent, though he neither midled with matters that he had cause to believe would not be acceptable, nor every story

and triffling matter he heard; Moreover your Petitioner doth just now suffer for Adam Boig's falt in having the Gazette stop, tho' that disagreeable paragraph was not in, which being in the Courant was displeasing to your Lordships, as well as by his practicing the paper sellers, so that, by their contributions, they neither would sell the Gazettes, nor permit any other person whom I employ'd, pretending to be countenanced by the Magistrats," &c. &c.

The Lords of the Council, tired of the bother, and determined to act impartially, by an order on the 26th June stopped both papers till such time as they had examined the merits of the case. In the meanwhile Boig replies to Donaldson's petition, and, with reason on his side, points out to their lordships that it was no fault of his that Donaldson charged more than he for his news. In these days, when newspapers tell up their incomes with five figures in a row, it is amusing to see what importance he attaches to a gain of eight shillings a-week: "And I must say that his Profit cannot but be Considerable, when he sells at my Price, for all my News comes by the Common Post, and I pay the Postage; whereas John Bisset his Conjunct gets his News all by the Secretaries Pacquet free of Postage, which is at least Eight Shillings sterling a-week free gain to them." Then, ever proud of himself giving the accounts of "when ships comes and goes," he twits Donaldson about the meagreness of his shipping news: "Mr. Donaldson, tho' he had a Yearly Allowance from the Royal Burrows, never touched anything of that nature, nor settled a Correspondent at any Port in the Kingdom, no, not so much as at Leith."

Donaldson puts in a petition in reply, in which he asserts that "there is no possibility of two News Writers subsisting by that employment in this place;" but as he did not give in his patent with the petition, it could not be entertained, and he had to move the Council again. He adopts the tone of an ill-used man, showing "that your

Petitioner having some Years bygone obtain'd the Sole Privilege of Publishing the News, which Project was look'd on as a general Benefit, and has been Prosecute with so much Care and Diligence that by this means he made a shift to subsist himself and Family, and was thereby supported under the great Losses he sustain'd by his early Zeal and Affection to the Government, as is well known to many of your Lordships.

"Tho' this Project encroach'd on no Man's Province, but was set on foot by your Petitioner for supplying the pinching Necessities he was Reduc'd to, yet this could not skreen him from Envy. Adam Boig, out of a design to wrest this small Benefit to himself, contrived with a Printer, formerly employed by your Petitioner (whom he found it his Interest to disengadge himself of), to undertake a News Print"—and in this strain he proceeds to solicit its suppression. On the 24th of July, the Council granted permission to Donaldson to cite Boig before them to give an account of himself, and on the 28th of August a committee was appointed to consider the matter, and, after examining Boig, they came to a resolution of recommending that Boig should be allowed to proceed with his *Courant*, on condition of his undertaking to write nothing offensive to the government. The matter seems to have got into the Circumlocution Office, for it was not until the 2d of October that the Council accorded permission to Boig to resume his publication, getting from him the following remarkable undertaking:—

"Oct. 5, 1705. Be it knowen To all men be thir presents, Me, Adam Boig, Author of the Edinburgh Curant, Forasmuch as the Lords of her Majesties Privie Councill be their Act of the date, the second day of October, did take off the Stop formerly made by their Lordships to my printing and publishing the Curant, and allowed me to publish and print the samen as formerly, upon my enacting of myself to the effect efter mentioned;

Therefore with ye me to be bound, obleedg'd and enacted Likeas I be the tenor heir of bind, obleedge and enact myself in the books of her Majesties Privie Councill, That I shall publish nothing in my Curant concerning the Government till first the samen be revised by the Clerks of her Majesties Privie Councill. And I consent to the registration hereof in the books of her Majesties Privie Councill to have the strength of ane decreet, that letters on six dayes, and others, if need be's, may be direct hereon. In form as Effeirs. And to that effect Constitutes —— my procurators. In witness whereof, written be John Braid, writter in Edinburgh, I have subscrivit thir presents at Edinburgh the fifth of October I^m VII^c and five years, before these witnesses, David Caw, writer in Edinburgh, and the said John Braid.

"ADAM BOIG."*

Such were the conditions imposed upon the early newswriters in Scotland. We shall see how soon the press burst its bonds and declared itself independent.

* Maitland Miscellany, vol. ii. pp. 251-71.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SCOTTISH PRESS CONTINUED—JAMES WATSON—DE FOE AGAIN—STRANGE PRIVILEGES—THE FIRST FOREIGN NEWS—THE "CALEDONIAN MERCURY"—THE FIRST LITERARY NEWS—WILLIAM ROLLAND—THOMAS RUDDIMAN—THE PROVINCIAL PAPERS—GLASGOW, ABERDEEN, AND DUMFRIES.

ASSOCIATED in the first instance with the *Edinburgh Gazette*, and afterwards with the *Edinburgh Courant*, was one of those energetic and persevering spirits whom we have so often been called upon to admire in this history, steadily bearing losses and persecutions, shrinking from no danger, appalled by no difficulties—now assisted by a few time-servers, now deserted and alone, but always intent upon the one purpose—James Watson, the printer, of Edinburgh. This, in many respects, extraordinary man, who has left behind him a curious, and now rare, history of printing, with specimens of the types in use in his office, was a native of Aberdeen, and the son of a merchant. In 1695, he set up a printing-office in Edinburgh, but, not being able to get a license from the privy council, he worked without it, and suffered several prosecutions in consequence. In 1699 he began the *Edinburgh Gazette*, but only published forty-one numbers, when he transferred the property, in July, to John Reid. Six years afterwards, in February, 1705, he established the *Edinburgh Courant*, but only printed fifty-five numbers, when he relinquished it into the hands of Andrew Anderson, and, in September, started the *Scots Courant*, which he continued to print till

1718. This was the first thrice-a-week paper published in Scotland; its price was only one penny, but it exhibits a marked improvement both in its contents and its typography. In 1711, Watson, in conjunction with Mr. Frebairn,* got a patent from the queen, and henceforth printed "according to law," and without molestation, dying in easy circumstances September 24th, 1722.†

Some of the materials which are left us of this early history of the Scottish press—scattered and disarranged by the devastating hand, or the keystones, perhaps, hidden in the dust, of Time—do not seem to fit when put together. Thus, while we find Donaldson memorialising the lords of the council, certainly in the characters of proprietor and compiler of the *Gazette*, and Boig in the same relations to the *Courant*, we know for certain that Watson at the same periods respectively was printer and compiler of both those papers, and he makes the one over to Reid and the other to Anderson, without our hearing again of either Donaldson or Boig, until 1710, when we find the town council authorising De Foe to print the *Courant* "in the place of the deceased, Adam Bog." "Yet," says Mr. Chalmers, who has himself noticed this latter discrepancy—"yet was this paper certainly printed by John Reid, junior, in 1709 and 1710, after the 1st of February"‡ (the date of the entry in favour of De Foe).

To reconcile the first of the conflicting statements, we can only suppose that Watson, being out of favour and unable to procure a patent, got Donaldson in the one case and Boig in the other to apply for the exclusive right of printing news. The mystery of the *Courant*, which Chalmers notices, but fails to clear up, is not so easily accounted for.

Be this as it may, on February 1st, 1710, the town

* Watson's "History of Printing."

† Chalmers's "Biographical Dictionary."

‡ Chalmers's "Life of Ruddiman," note, p. 120.

council of Edinburgh gave authority to Daniel De Foe "to print the *Edinburgh Courant*," and prohibited any other person from printing news under the same title. De Foe, however, only carried it on till September 2d, when he started the *Examiner*, a weekly paper, containing a summary of foreign and political events. The first two numbers were printed by Watson, but the paper was then transferred to London, although Watson still continued to reprint it at Edinburgh until 1715, when it dropped.

In October, 1708, John Reid started the *Edinburgh Flying Post*, to appear three times a week; and, on August 17th, 1709, appeared the *Scots Postman*, "printed for David Fearne by John Monceur." This Fearne was an advocate, and possessed sufficient influence with the town council to obtain from them an injunction against any other persons printing news on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, the days on which his paper appeared.

On the 27th of March, 1710, the *Northern Tatler* appeared, to be continued every Monday and Friday, and printed by John Reid, the great news-printer of Edinburgh, "for Samuel Colvill."

In 1714 the *Edinburgh Gazette* and the *Scots Postman* were amalgamated, and came out on one sheet with both titles; and on the 15th of December, 1718, a new and highly privileged paper, the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, which is the only paper of the period still existing, and the oldest one now published in Scotland. It was the property of three partners, John Mossman, James M'Ewen, and William Brown, and "sold at the shops of the saids James M'Ewen and William Brown." The privilege was granted "to James M'Ewen, stationer, burgess," of exclusively printing news in Edinburgh on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, on condition that he should "give ane coppie of his print to the magistrates" prior to publication. The prospectus of the journal justifies its appearance, by asserting

that "hitherto our newspapers have either been very partial, lame, and defective, or otherwise stuffed with uncertain, ill-digested, false, or frivolous accounts." This paper was of an enlarged size, having three folio half-sheets, or six pages of double columns, at the price of three halfpence. It was the first Scottish journal that established a system of foreign correspondence, which is thus announced in the prospectus: "In order the accounts of foreign occurrences may be truly drawn, the author is furnished with the foreign papers, both in Dutch and French, and the original papers themselves may be seen at the Royal Exchange Coffee-house, or some other coffee-house in Edinburgh." Such an astonishing and novel arrangement, then, was this of getting the foreign news from the original papers, that "the author" thought it necessary to exhibit the papers to make the public believe in it! The result is to be, that "we shall have at Edinburgh foreign accounts a post sooner than otherwise they could come by the London papers."

Amusing as may be the fuss with which this arrangement is heralded, we will repress the smile which it provokes in consideration of its having been a laudable endeavour on the part of the author to increase the utility of the newspaper, and, remembering that it was the first effort of the kind, give to him that credit which is always due to enterprise, even when the changes which time and circumstances have made might lead us to slight the narrow and devious track of the pioneer.

This paper and its contemporaries were soon to be threatened by an insidious pretender in the *Caledonian Mercury*, which came out on the 28th of April, 1720, as the continuation of the *Mercurius Caledonius*, the first native Scottish newspaper. Now, as that journal had ceased to exist for sixty years—rather a protracted case of suspended animation—and had never lived above ten weeks, it must be confessed a bold stroke on the part of the projector of the new paper to profess to have resuscitated, after so long a period, a

journal which might be reckoned to have come almost still-born into the world; but the founder, William Rolland, a lawyer, boldly brought it forth as a continuation of the *Mercurius Caledonius*, and to this day (for it still exists) it is, by some, stated to be the oldest paper in Scotland. It came out as "A Short Account of the Most Considerable Newes Foreign and Domestick, and of the Latest Bookes and Pamphlets imported from Abroad and printed here"—the latter feature being original in the composition of Scottish newspapers—"printed for W. R. by William Adams, junior, and sold at the signe of the Printing Presse in the Parliament Close." Its days of issue were the same as those of the *Evening Courant*—Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday—rather a singular arrangement, as the thrice a week papers generally appeared on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and never on two consecutive days. Nearly four years after its foundation, and with its 590th number, on January 7th, 1724, Thomas Ruddiman, then under-keeper of the Advocates' Library, was employed to print it, his printing-office then being in Morocco's Close, in the Lawn Market. On the death of Rolland, the proprietor, in March, 1729, it fell altogether into the hands of Thomas Ruddiman and his brother Walter, and was "sold at the shop of Alexander Symmers, bookseller, in the Parliament Square." The size was at this time four small quarto pages, with two columns in each page, and fifty lines to the column, so that it contained in all only four hundred lines. In the year of the Rebellion of the young Pretender, the government kept its eye upon the *Caledonian Mercury*, on account of the avowed Jacobite principles of its conductor; and the son of Ruddiman, who managed it for his father, having incautiously copied a *quasi* seditious article from an English journal, was arrested and committed to the Tolbooth in Edinburgh, and although the interest of the elder Ruddiman subsequently procured his discharge, he shortly afterwards died of a disease which he had contracted in that

prison. The *Caledonian Mercury* continued to be the property of the Ruddiman family until May, 1772, when it was sold, together with the printing-house and materials, by the trustees of Thomas Ruddiman's grandchildren, to John Robertson, a typographer, from whom it passed into the hands of the family of Mr. Allen, who is the present proprietor.

Ruddiman was much more than a newspaper printer or librarian; he was a classical scholar and editor of classics; a grammarian and an annotator of grammar; an historian and an historical controversialist; and he has had his life written in nearly five hundred well-filled pages by George Chalmers. He was born on a farm on the shore of the Murray Firth, in the parish of Boyndie, within three miles of the shire town of Banff, and was educated at the parish school, the master of which, George Morrison, had the judgment to detect, and the sense to encourage, his peculiar leaning to the classics, and to Ovid in particular. In October, 1690, at the age of sixteen, he left his father's house clandestinely, with only a smuggled sovereign from his sister, to appear in King's College, Aberdeen, and claim one of the bursaries which are given annually to the best Latin scholars. The confidence of the lad was well founded, and the rustic, meanly clad and half dressed (for he had been robbed on the road by gipsies), carried away the richest prize, which enabled him to study Greek, physics, and metaphysics, during four terms. On the 20th June, 1694, he obtained the degree of master of arts. He then became tutor in a private family, and afterwards master of the school of Lawrence Kirk in the Mearns. In 1700 he removed to Edinburgh, and next year married a young woman of good family in the Orkneys. In 1703 he obtained the appointment of under-keeper of the Advocates' Library, and in 1706 sought to increase the small income which he derived from that office, by taking a few select scholars and writing and revising for the booksellers,

and in 1707 by holding auctions of books and literary property. It was not until 1715 that he commenced printing, and from that time he continued to feed the press which his brother and partner, Walter, worked. His productions were chiefly classical, including a Latin grammar, which rose to great favour, till 1724, when he began to print the *Caledonian Mercury*. Ruddiman died at Edinburgh, possessed of well-earned and carefully husbanded wealth, on the 19th January, 1757, in the eighty-third year of his age.*

The next paper of any note that followed the *Caledonian Mercury* was the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, which was established in or about the year 1744, and is still in existence, as is also the *Edinburgh Advertiser*, started January 3d, 1764.

While these several papers flourished or failed in Edinburgh, the provinces were following the example of the capital, and raising presses of their own. The first of these towns appears to have been Glasgow, which, on November 11th, 1715, issued the *Glasgow Courant*—a title afterwards changed to the *West Country Intelligence*. It contained twelve quarto pages, and appeared on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, at the price of three halfpence, "or a penny to regular customers." A file of it is still to be seen in the Glasgow College Library. In 1729 came out the *Glasgow Journal*, which has existed to the present day.

Aberdeen comes next to Glasgow, having produced the *Aberdeen Journal and North British Magazine* in 1746. It was founded by James Chalmers, and still continues in his family; and the first number has an historical interest as containing a report of the battle of Culloden, after which its publication seems to have been suspended for two years.

About this period, also, the *Dumfries Journal* appeared; but there appears still to have been but very little demand

* Chalmers's "Life of Ruddiman." London: 1794.

for newspapers in Scotland, for it is believed that at the period of the rebellion of 1745 there were only, in the whole of Scotland, three newspapers, two of which were published in Edinburgh, and one in Glasgow. In 1782 the number had increased to eight; and in 1792 it was fourteen; and in 1795, thirteen.

CHAPTER XX.

IRISH NEWSPAPERS—THE FIRST DUBLIN PAPER—GEORGE FALKENER.—THE PROVINCIAL PRESS—WATERFORD—BELFAST—"THE FREEMAN'S JOURNAL" DR. LUCAS—"SAUNDERS'S NEWS LETTER"—THE GOVERNMENT PRESS DISCOMFITED—THE ORGAN OF THE NIGHT: THE "UNION STAR"—NUMBER OF PAPERS AT THE CLOSE OF THE CENTURY.

In searching for the earliest Irish newspaper, we turn over the mass of papers published in the seventeenth century without finding it. When England was issuing her broadsheets in flights, and Scotland was beginning to interest itself in public events, Ireland was still. The "Warranted Tidings from Ireland" were all printed in London, and there may possibly have been no press in the country—certainly there was no newspaper—until the year 1700, when a full-blown daily paper came forth and buzzed the news through Dublin. This was called *Pue's Occurrences*, and continued for more than half a century. The second Dublin paper was not started until 1728, but that, too, was a daily publication. It was printed by Swift's George Falkener, and named *Falkener's Journal;* but it was most carelessly printed and compiled.

Dublin was for some time content with two newspapers; but the provinces were evincing a desire for news, and first of all, Waterford, which got a local organ in 1729, the *Waterford Flying Post*, "containing the most material news both foreign and domestick." This paper, printed on a sheet of writing-paper and embellished with the royal and city arms, came out twice a week, and the price was a halfpenny,* or one shilling per quarter.

* It will be remembered that the Newspaper Stamp Act of 1712 did no extend to Ireland.

Apparently, next to Waterford comes Belfast, in which city appeared the *Belfast News Letter* (a paper still in existence), in 1737.

These are all the traces of a newspaper press which we can find in provincial Ireland during the first half of the century. Let us return to Dublin.

In 1763 there bounded into public favour a newspaper, nurtured by a committee of United Irishmen, and named the *Freeman's Journal.* This new and popular Dublin paper was put under the management of Dr. Lucas, who, by his talent and energy, won for it the highest position from the very first, and got such men as Grattan, Flood, Burgh, and Yelverton for his coadjutors. Its influence increased when its editor was returned to parliament as one of the representatives of the city of Dublin, but it waned on his death in 1774, falling behind *Saunders's News Letter*, which had been started about the same time and now took the lead.

The *Dublin Gazette* seems up to this time to have been less of an official organ than the *London Gazette*, for we find an order of council, dated March 18th, 1776, prohibiting its publishing any news not guaranteed by government.

The government, recognising the power of the press, and finding that it was all exerted against itself in Ireland, used every means to induce and encourage the establishment of an organ in Dublin—but in vain. No printer would run the risk to his windows, if not to his life, of printing a newspaper on the government side, so in 1780 a press and types, and a staff of English editors, printers, and compositors, were sent out, and a paper started with the title of the *Volunteer Evening Post*, professing to advocate the popular side. At last it was found wavering—the secret oozed out, and an Irish mob was up. The editor fled for his life and got away, but the printer, less fortunate, fell into the hands of the populace and was carried to the

Tenter-fields and tarred and feathered. The paper broke down, and the press, types, and materials were advertised for sale; but no one would have anything to do with the obnoxious Saxon things, and, after three years, printers, plant and all, were fetched back to England. The government did not improve the temper of the people by its trumpery prosecutions of its press. In 1790 (on the 26th June) the printer of the *Dublin Morning Post* stood in the pillory, on College-green, for what was called a seditious libel on the queen—the reprinting from the London papers of a passage which asserted that "the —— was formerly a very domestic woman, but now gives up too much of her time to politics."

It may well be supposed that during the agitation of the Union in 1797-98 the press was roused to stormy action. Sedition was uttered, treason called patriotism, and murder hidden under the name of political justice. The most violent paper was the *Union Star*, under the management of Arthur Young, who had previously been proposing rebellion in the *Press*, and he was assisted by Thomas Addis, Emmett, and the other chiefs of the "United Irishmen" insurrection. Thomas Moore wrote one letter in it, which so frightened his mother that she got him to pledge himself not to repeat it.* And well might the good lady be alarmed, for this was the kind of language held by the *Union Star*:—"We here offer to public justice the following detestable traitors as spies and perjured informers," and then follow the names and descriptions of the parties denounced. "Let the indignation of men be raised against the impious wretch who profanely assumes the title of reigning by the grace of God, and impudently tells the world he can do no wrong." The king is also called "an impious blasphemer," told "his fate is inevitable," and reminded in a pleasant vein, that "the first professor of his

* Russell's "Journals, Correspondence, &c. of Moore," vol. i. p. 55.

trade has recently bled for the crimes of the craft," and "that his own throne is tottering."* Assassination is thus recommended as meritorious: appealing to "the noble and venerated name of Brutus," the writer goes on in this strain: "Yes, prince of patriot assassins! thus we defend assassination, and clear it from the rubbish of ignorance and falsehoods of despotism, which were too often successful in confounding the characters of the man who destroyed a tyrant and him who, to gratify private revenge, or urged by avarice, might sell himself to murder an innocent fellow-creature." Have we not heard some such detestable doctrines preached in our own times? But this is the language in which the *Union Star* points out victims for this divine right:—

"The *Union Star* offers to justice the following detestable traitors!

> "Perhaps some arm, more lucky than the rest,
> May reach his heart, and free the land from bondage."

"1. William Bristow, sovereign of Belfast: by trade a minister of the Church of England. This infernal mountebank unites the cruelty of an inquisitor to all the chicanery of a vicious priest.

"2. Chichester Skeffington, high sheriff of the county of Antrim. This villain inherits all the vices of tyranny as a descendant of the first English robber.

"3. Fairbrother; about five feet three inches high, ruddy complexion; a clothier in Tenter's-lane, in the liberty—one of Corbally's jury.

"4. Luttrell. This villain is remarkably ill-looking; about five feet five inches high, black complexion, wears a uniform, and his hair in a queue.

"5. Pettigrew. Five feet six inches high, black complexion, thirty-three years of age: lives in Linen-Hall-

* Gifford's "Life of Pitt," vol. iii. p. 244.

street—a serjeant in Dick's Company—a juryman of Young Hart's."

And thus it proceeds through a list of nineteen names.

This paper was secretly printed and posted up on the walls in the night, and all the efforts of the authorities were for the time unable to suppress it. A reward of seven hundred pounds was offered for the printer, but the secret was faithfully preserved, and the very placards offering the reward were covered over in the night with this dark organ of blood and murder.

The number of papers published throughout Ireland had increased far more rapidly than in Scotland. In 1782 there were only three; but in 1790 there were twenty-seven, and in 1795 there were thirty-five.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COLONIAL PRESS—NORTH AMERICA; BOSTON—JOHN CAMPBELL AND WILLIAM BROOKER—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND HIS BROTHER JAMES—INCREASE MATHER DENOUNCES THE "NEW ENGLAND COURANT"—WHITFIELD AND THE METHODIST PARTY—DR. BYLES AND MATTHEW ADAMS—JEREMY GRIDLEY—THOMAS FLEET—SAMUEL ADAMS' CLUB AND NEWSPAPER—JONATHAN MAYHEW AND COOPER—DAVID FOWLE ARRESTED AND THE PAPER STOPPED—JAMES OTIS—OXENBRIDGE THATCHER—JOHN QUINCEY ADAMS—SAMUEL DEXTER—THE PRESS IN PENNSYLVANIA—ANDREW BRADFORD AND HIS PAPER—KEIMER'S PAPER—HOW FRANKLIN GOT HOLD OF IT—JOSEPH BREINTNALL—DAVID HALL—NEW YORK—RIP VAN DAM AND THE OPPOSITION—TRIAL OF PETER ZENGER—"A GREAT HURRAH!"—JOHN ZENGER—THE PRESS IN MARYLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND VIRGINIA—MIXED PAPERS—SLOW PROGRESS OF THE AMERICAN PRESS.

Out and away, beyond the shores of England, its press had stretched; far in the woods and prairies of America the English newspaper had long been set up. For even then was developed that national characteristic, which the more recent extensive colonization has served so forcibly to illustrate: among adventure and danger, in hardship and peril, in distress and starvation, surrounded by savage tribes, sunk in a swamp, encamped on a mountain, afloat on the sea, blocked up in the ice, no five hundred Englishmen can live long together without a newspaper springing up in their midst. It is strange and peculiar to our country, for it springs from the very essence of our institutions. Venice had newspapers of her own, but we find no traces of her carrying them into other countries with her arms—the splendid conquests of Spain in the New World did not introduce the newspaper into it: it came through another source, and spread from the north, where the Northmen of the Old World had planted it.

Very soon after the complete newspaper was known in England—we say very soon, for, considering the comparatively slow progress of emigration, the length of the voyage, and the numerous difficulties which beset enterprise a century and a half ago, it *was* very soon—twenty years after the *Orange Intelligencer* first appeared in London, and two years after the first daily newspaper, the British settlers in North America had got a journal of their own. This was the *Boston News Letter*, founded by John Campbell, bookseller and postmaster at Boston, on the 24th of April, 1704—a paper which declined with the British rule and died in 1774. It was printed on half a sheet of pot paper, folio, with a small pica type. The first page is filled with an extract from the London *Flying Post*, respecting the Pretender, who styles himself "James the Eighth of Scotland," and the queen's speech on the event; a few articles under the head of "Boston;" four short paragraphs of marine intelligence from New York, Philadelphia, and New London; and one advertisement. The proprietor invites advertisers in the following style:—"*The News Letter* is to be continued weekly; and all persons who have houses, lands, farms, tenements, ships, goods, wares, merchandise, &c. &c., to be sold or let, or servants run away, or goods stole or lost, may have them inserted at a reasonable rate from twopence to five shillings." Campbell, although the projector and the proprietor, was neither the printer nor publisher of the new paper, for it bore the title and imprint, "The *Boston News Letter*. Published by Authority. Boston: Printed by B. Green. Sold by Nicholas Boone, at his Shop, near the Old Meeting House." The printer was Bartholomew Green, eldest son of Thomas Green, printer to Cambridge University; and the proprietor, John Campbell, was a son of Duncan Campbell, the organiser of the postal system in North America.

Thirty years had elapsed since a Governor of Virginia,

Sir William Berkeley, in his address to the colonists, had exclaimed, "Thanks be to God, we have here neither free schools nor printing presses, and I hope that we may not have any for a hundred years: for education has sent into the world doubt, heresy, and sectarianism, and the printing press has propagated, in addition to all these evils, attacks against governments." Berkeley had as much of his will as it was possible to conceive, for, sixty years after this memorable speech, Virginia was still without a press, whilst most of her neighbours were sending out their weekly broadsheets, and Massachusetts had had one newspaper thirty years, two for eleven years, and three for nine years. The population of Boston when the *News Letter* was founded only amounted to eight thousand souls, and we fear that Campbell's speculation was unremunerative at first, for, at the end of the second year, we find him petitioning for a restoration of his rights in the postal service, and he then says, "For the last two years the petitioner has taken upon himself, for the good of the public, the trouble and expense of printing each week a news letter, containing the events from abroad and in the interior, and has published it at a more moderate price than is done in any part of England, although the expenses here are four times as high. During this period, the petitioner has not yet received encouragement sufficient to defray the charges of his work."

Misfortune, too, fell upon Campbell, more dire than the interference with his postal monopoly, for in the great fire of the 9th of October, 1711, which consumed a great part of Boston, the Post-office, his own house, and the printing-office of the *Boston News Letter*, with all its press, plant, machinery, and type, were destroyed. The *News Letter*, with the assistance of Bartholomew Green, however, still went on. The size of Campbell's sheet fluctuates from week to week: sometimes it is folio, then quarto, and then octavo, and he accounts for it in No. 577, on the 2d of

May, 1715, in the following candid address:—"If the undertaker received a suitable encouragement, either under the form of a salary, or by a sufficient number of subscribers who would engage for the entire year, he would give a sheet a week to circulate the news, but, in the absence of one or other of these encouragements, he is reduced to do the best he can."

These complaints became less frequent, and we may presume the paper more prosperous, till the year 1718 saw Campbell re-established in his functions of director of the post.

But Campbell's sorrows were soon to begin again. For fifteen years he had enjoyed a monopoly in news, not only of Boston, but of the whole of the American colonies, but on the 21st of December, 1719,* a rival was raised up, in the shape of the *Boston Gazette*, by William Brooker, a director of posts. Crafty John Campbell must, we suspect, have known what was brewing, for, by a singular coincidence, we find him, in the earlier part of the year, making very fair promises and doubling the size of his paper, ingenuously acknowledging his faults in terms which comically depict him panting after Time, twelvemonths behind, with his sheet full of the news which the Old Reaper had left from his harvest the year before:—"The undertaker of this *News Letter*, in January last, gave information that, after fourteen years' experience, it was impossible with half-a-sheet a week to carry on all the public occurrences of Europe; to make up which deficiency, and to render the news newer and more acceptable, he has since printed every other week a whole sheet; whereby that which seemed old in the former half-sheet becomes new now by the sheet; which is easy to be seen by any one who will be at the pains to trace back former years, and even this time twelvemonths. We were then thirteen months behind with the foreign news, and now we are less

* Thomas's "History of the American Press."

than five months; so that, by the sheet, we have retrieved about eight months since January last; and any one that has the *News Letter* to January next (life permitted) will be accommodated with all the news from Europe needful to be known in these parts." Imagine the *Times* announcing that it would be carried on next year, the life of the proprietor permitted! In a subsequent number, notice is given that, if a sheet did not appear every other week, during the winter, the publisher would make it up in the spring, "when ships do arrive from Great Britain." No more complaints in all this: only promises—fair promises. What was coming? The *Boston Gazette!* And when it *did* come, what said Master Campbell? "I pity the readers of the new paper: its sheets smell stronger of beer than of the midnight oil. It is not reading fit for honest people!" Not brooking competition, he transferred the paper to his printer, Bartholomew Green, in 1722, and reclined into the *dignitatem*, if not the *otium*, of a justice of the peace. The *Boston News Letter* tells us the last that has to be said of John Campbell, on the 7th of March, 1728:—"On Monday last, the 4th instant, died here, at the age of seventy-five years, John Campbell, Esquire, formerly director of the post in this town, many years editor of the *Boston News Letter*, and one of her Majesty's justices of the peace for the County of Suffolk.

Two years after the *Boston Gazette* had haunted the vision of Campbell, a more dangerous rival crossed his path than the one that smelt of beer; for, on the 21st of August, 1721, James Franklin, brother of Benjamin, started at Boston the *New England Courant*.* He had been employed to print the early numbers of the *Boston Gazette*, but the work being taken away from him to be given to Thomas Green, a younger brother of Campbell's printer, his resentment urged him to set up a rival paper, for

* Jared Sparks' Notes to the "Autobiography" of Franklin.

though he was a man of spirit and enterprise, he was also hasty, passionate, opinionated, and vindictive.

James was the eldest son of Josiah Franklin, a storekeeper of Boston, who had emigrated from England in 1682, to escape the persecution with which the nonconformists were visited, and by honest industry had acquired a comfortable competence for his old age, and sent his eldest boy to the old country to learn the trade of a printer. In 1717 the son returned to Boston with a press and types of his own, and set up in business. Meanwhile a younger brother, Benjamin, was growing up, and, being apprenticed at the age of twelve to James, was advancing in a knowledge of his trade, when the *New England Courant* was set up in his brother's office, and friends predicted (as it is so often the delight of friends to do) that it *must* fail. But these friends, who "thought one paper enough for America," miscalculated, and James Franklin's paper flourished. "He had some ingenious men among his friends," says Benjamin, in his "Autobiography," "who amused themselves by writing little pieces, which gained it credit and made it more in demand;" but the fact appears to be, if we may judge by the prosecutions that ensued, that there was a club of writers contributing to its columns, who made it the vehicle of attacks against the clergy and many of the religious opinions of the day. It differed from its predecessors in being framed more upon the model of the *Tatler* and the *Guardian*, which had been in vogue when James Franklin was in London, and gave dissertations upon morals and literature as well as the stock subjects of the other papers; local news, extracts of letters from beyond sea, market prices, and other business announcements. These essays very often depart a long way from the track worn by the footsteps of Isaac Bickerstaff and Nestor Ironside, and, with an evident desire to excuse the *Courant* and its writers, which is natural to an American writer who adores the name of Franklin,

Mr. Sparks is obliged to confess that the language "amounted sometimes to harshness and violence, and even did not always eschew coarse words;" and, finally, comes to the conclusion that, "nevertheless, taking everything into consideration, and, above all, comparing it with contemporary journals, and even with the American papers of our own time, the *Courant* presents nothing very reprehensible."

James Franklin's staff of writers, it must be confessed, handled the clergy rather roughly, and was denounced by them as the "club of free thinkers," and even "the club of the devils of hell." The puritan elder, Increase Mather, then eighty-four years of age, had been among the first subscribers to the *Courant;* but, in the third number, he recognised the inspiration of the devil, and refused to take it any longer. On the other hand, it must not be concealed that the clergy of the province were proceeding in a way that would raise the indignation of a man of independent spirit, and that the family of the Franklins had already suffered religious persecution enough to make them jealous and watchful when symptoms of intolerance were making themselves manifest in the new country. But the great explosion between the pulpit and the press was destined to be upon a medical instead of a theological subject. The elders of the Church were advocates of the practice of inoculation for the small-pox, and the *Courant* headed the party opposed to it. The dispute raged high, and, on the 24th of January, 1722, the following manifesto, signed by Increase Mather, appeared in the *Boston Gazette:*—"For myself, who have seen New England from its commencement, I cannot but be confounded with the degradation of this land. I remember the time when the civil government would have taken efficacious measures to suppress such an accursed pamphlet as that. If these measures are not taken, I have great fear that some terrible judgment will weigh upon the country, which the anger of God will not suffer to be relieved, and for which there

will be no cure. I cannot forbear taking pity upon young Franklin; he is young yet, but perhaps he may soon have to appear before the judgment-seat of God, and what excuse will he give then for having printed such base and abominable things? And I ought in conscience to invite the subscribers of the *Courant* to reflect upon the consequences of being accomplices in the crimes of others, and no longer to support this journal of perdition!"

The young apprentice, attracted by the noise his brother's friends were making in their little world, was excited to emulate them; "But," he says, "being still a boy, and suspecting that my brother would object to printing anything of mine in his paper, if he knew it to be mine, I contrived to disguise my hand, and writing an anonymous paper, I put it at night under the door of the printing-house. It was found in the morning, and communicated to his writing friends when they called in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with their approbation, and that, in their different guesses at the author, none were named but men of some character among us for learning and ingenuity. I suppose that I was rather lucky in my judges, and that they were not really so very good as I then believed them to be. Encouraged, however, by this attempt, I wrote and sent in the same way to the press several other pieces that were equally approved." At length he discovered his secret to his brother, who, gratified at first, soon, with a morbid turn which seems to have belonged to him, had misgivings lest applause should make the young man vain. Disputes arose between them which were carried before their father for adjudication. James resorted to violence, and Benjamin's spirit rebelled. There was a temporary estrangement between them; but a common enemy assailed them, and they clung together again for mutual protection. The House of Assembly came to a resolution that James Franklin, the editor and printer of

the *New England Courant*, having published "passages boldly reflecting on his Majesty's Government, and on the administration in this province, the ministry, churches, and college, and that tend to fill readers' minds with vanity, to the dishonour of God and the disservice of good men," should suffer a month's imprisonment. This punishment was inflicted without any previous examination or trial, or any specification of the obnoxious passages. At the same time young Benjamin was arrested, and examined by the council, but discharged as being an apprentice only, when, to avenge his brother's confinement, he gave the Government some "rubs,"* in the paper which he was now left to manage, which the prisoner "took very kindly."

On the discharge of James Franklin from custody, the Assembly made an order that "James Franklin should no longer print the newspaper called the *New England Courant*. With an outward obeisance to this remarkable order the Boston printer inwardly resolved to elude it, and rejecting a proposition for changing the name of his paper, James Franklin put it into the name of his brother Benjamin, in which it continued for some months. In January, 1723, James Franklin was again arrested, and demanding on what article the charge against him was based, was directed to an Essay on Hypocrisy which had appeared in his paper, and which contained the following paragraphs:—

"Religion is, indeed, the principal thing, but too much of it is worse than none at all. The world abounds with knaves and villains; but of all knaves, the religious knave is the worst, and villanies acted under the cloak of religion the most execrable. Moral honesty, though it will not carry a man to heaven, yet I am sure there is no going thither without it.

* Mr. Cucheval Clarigny translates the phrase, "*trouver l'occasion de donner sur les doigts à leurs adversaires.*"—*Histoire de la Presse aux États Unis*, p. 334.

"But are there such men as these in thee, O New England? Heaven forbid there should be any; but, alas! it is to be feared the number is not small. 'Give me an honest man,' say some, 'for all a religious man;' a distinction which, I confess, I never heard of before. The whole country suffers for the villanies of such wolves in sheep's clothing, and we are all represented as a pack of knaves and hypocrites for their sakes."

We have quoted the passage to show what could be construed into blasphemy by the spirit of bigotry and intolerance which aimed the first blow at the liberty of the press in America. Here were no names mentioned—no sect indicated—nothing said beyond what is admitted as a truth in the present day; yet for this James Franklin was, without trial, or the faintest show of legal proceedings, again consigned to prison on the Speaker's warrant.

The report of the commission which was appointed to consider this offensive article, and which sat on the 14th, 15th, and 16th of January, is preserved in the legislative archives of Massachusetts; it declares "that the tendency of the journal is to turn religion into ridicule and to bring it into contempt; that the Holy Scriptures are abused in it; that the faithful ministers of the church are in it made the subjects of injurious criticism; that the Government of his Majesty is outraged, and the peace of his Majesty's liege subjects troubled;" and proposes that James Franklin shall no longer be allowed to publish the *Courant*, nor any other similar pamphlet or journal, without having first submitted it to the revision of the Provincial Secretary; and the judges of session for the county of Suffolk are instructed, at their next meeting, to require the said James Franklin to give sufficient security for his good behaviour for twelve months.

The *New England Courant* of the 11th of February succeeding those proceedings, contained the following announcement: "The former editor of this journal, con-

ceiving that the necessity of submitting all his manuscripts and the public news to the Secretary of Government would entail so much inconvenience that the benefit of the publication would disappear, has entirely abandoned his enterprise." It was afterwards nominally conducted by Benjamin Franklin, although the elder brother was still the proprietor notwithstanding this declaration; but, although it did not soften its tone in the slightest degree, the Government, warned by the murmurs of the public, did not choose to meddle with it again. Eight months afterwards, Benjamin, in a tiff with his brother, left Boston, and James Franklin, deserted and disheartened, gave up the paper in 1727, and carried his press off to Rhode Island, where he began printing the *Rhode Island Gazette*, in September 1732, which, on his death in February, 1735, continued to be carried on in the hands of his widow.

On the 27th of March, 1727, just as poor James Franklin had packed up his press with a broken spirit, the *New England Journal* was started at Boston, in the interest of Whitfield and Edwards, and edited by Dr. Byles and Matthew Adams; and on the 27th of September, 1731, appeared also at Boston the *Weekly Rehearsal*, edited by Jeremy Gridley, a profound lawyer and good writer, Attorney-General of Massachusetts, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Colonel of Militia, President of the Maritime Society, and Grand Master of the Freemasons. Gridley found it inconvenient to continue long editor of a public journal, and, after about a year, handed his paper over to his printer, Thomas Fleet, who changed its name to the *Evening Post*, which long continued to be by far the best edited and best printed newspaper in America.

In 1748, a group of ardent young men, with Samuel Adams at their head, set up the *Independent Advertiser*, a free-thinking and free-speaking journal, which started in avowed opposition to the Governor—Unitarian in its reli-

gious, and republican in its political opinions. The most prominent members of the club which carried it on, and furnished its articles, each in his turn, was Samuel Adams, who, originally intended for the bar, had devoted himself to politics from his entering life, and was the ruling spirit both of the club and of the paper. Another prominent contributor was Jonathan Mayhew, the founder of the sect of Unitarians, who was the first of the American clergy who openly rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, and, at the age of twenty-seven, gave up the living which he held, of one of the largest parishes at Boston, and gave to Massachusetts the opinions which it has held so firmly since. The *Independent Advertiser* regularly reproduced Mayhew's sermons, and one which he had preached on the occasion of an election in 1754, in which he strongly advocated the republican form of government, having in due course appeared in the columns of the paper, the Government resolved to put a stop to these publications and the paper at the same time. An opportunity was soon found. A bill imposing certain customs duties having passed the Assembly, the *Independent Advertiser* plucked it to pieces under the head of "The Monster of Monsters," and violently attacked the legislature for passing it. Daniel Fowler, the printer, was immediately arrested, and, on his refusal to divulge the name of the writer of the paper, he was committed to prison, where he remained a year, and on his release from which he quitted Boston, and made his way to Portsmouth in New Hampshire, where he started the first paper which had appeared in the province, the *New Hampshire Gazette*, on the 7th October, 1786, and which he carried on till his death in 1787. The young writers of the *Independent Advertiser*, however, proscribed by the Government and deserted by their printer, found vent in a newspaper started for them in April, 1785, by Edes and Gill, the printers, and entitled the *Boston Gazette*. It took the same emblem for the adornment of its heading as the

paper which had just dropped, the Goddess of Liberty; but Adams, who was the editor, sobered its tone, and, although it was firm and resolute, it partook but little of the seditious character of its predecessor. In the *Gazette* he had the assistance of his former colleague, Mayhew, and another minister, Cooper, and of James Otis, Oxenbridge Thatcher, the lawyer, John Adams (afterwards the second President of the Republic), the wealthy Samuel Dexter, and most of that band who afterwards stood up before the troops of George the Third, and, unfurling a flag which had never been seen before, bid them go back to their royal master, for America was no longer his.

Lights were beginning to be seen in other parts of "the plantations," while all this was going on at Boston. In 1719, the *American Weekly Miscellany* had been started at Philadelphia—the third paper of the American family—"Printed and sold by Andrew Bradford, at the Bible, in the Second Street, and John Copson, in the High Street, 1719-20." Although Bradford had the advantage of being postmaster and printer of the votes, his paper was very poorly conducted; and Benjamin Franklin, who had been rambling since he left Boston to Philadelphia, New York, and at last even to London, to purchase types for his employer, Keimer, was struck, on his return to Philadelphia in 1728, with the miserable appearance and shortcomings of the *Miscellany*, and conceived the idea of starting a paper of his own. This scheme he unfolded to his friend George Webb, a fellow-workman at Keimer's, who imprudently divulged it, and Keimer at once anticipated it with the *Universal Instructor in all the Arts and Sciences, or Pennsylvania Gazette.* Franklin's course was characteristic: the difficulty must be overcome by patience, perseverance, abnegation; it would be a work of time; a subtle policy must be followed, and the end must justify the means. He wrote a series of smart articles in his old favourite style of "The Spectator," which he called "The Busybody," and which he

published in Bradshaw's despised paper, throwing ridicule on Keimer and his *Gazette.* Joseph Breintnall, "a copier of deeds for the scriveners, a good-natured, friendly, middle-aged man, a great lover of poetry, reading all he could meet with, and writing some that was tolerable; very ingenious in making little knicknackeries, and of sensible conversation," was his coadjutor in this questionable work; and between them they wrote poor Keimer's paper down to a circulation of ninety copies, when, as Franklin had craftily calculated, the dwindling thing that had struggled on, dragging with it a ponderous title, and hounded along by satire and ridicule for three-quarters of a year, was offered to him for a mere trifle, "and I," adds Franklin, with something like a chuckle, "having been ready some time to go on with it, took it in hand directly, and it proved, in a few years, extremely profitable to me."* This is one of those clever strokes of policy, which Franklin, in the course of that self-laudatory account of his life which is often so distasteful to the reader, was pleased to parade among his other virtues of industry, perseverance, temperance, &c., and the success which attended it was, of course, all of his own getting; for his partner, Hugh Meredith, was "no compositor, a poor pressman, and seldom sober." Under these auspices, then, Franklin and Meredith, wisely dropping the first part of the title, brought out No. 40 of the *Pennsylvania Gazette,* on the 28th of September, 1729, in the city of Philadelphia. Next year, he got rid of the partner he describes so depreciatingly; but now he had to contend against old Bradford, the postmaster, who refused to let the *Gazette* go through the post, and, by thus restricting the circulation, of course secured a larger number of advertisements for his own little sheet, reducing Franklin to the necessity of bribing the post-riders to circulate his paper, until 1737, when he received the appointment of postmaster himself, and "found it of great advan-

* Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.

tage; for, though the salary was small, it facilitated the correspondence that improved my newspaper, increased the number demanded, as well as the advertisements to be inserted, so that it came to afford me a considerable income,"—Bradford's paper, of course, declining in an equal ratio. On the 28th of January, 1735, we read the following announcement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*:—"By the indulgence of the Honourable Colonel Spotswood, post-master-general, the printer hereof is allowed to send the *Gazette* by the post, post-free to all parts of the post road from Virginia to New England." The paper took part with the Assembly in its dispute with Governor Barnett, and acquired great popularity and influence in consequence; and it projected and proposed numerous reforms and useful measures, for the execution of which the province was, in fact, mainly indebted to it; among others, the establishment of a police, and the defence of the coasts and frontiers. In 1748, Franklin took into partnership a Scotchman named David Hall, and as he became gradually absorbed in state affairs the *Gazette* was left to the supervision of the new partner. On Franklin receiving, in 1757, his first mission to England from the Assembly of Pennsylvania, Hall had to take the entire management, and carried on the paper in his absence with great credit. It was a valuable property by this time, and had an official air about it, for in 1737 the House of Assembly had given to Franklin the printing of its votes, which Bradford, of the *American Mercury*, had enjoyed for so many years and executed in so slovenly a manner. In 1766 the paper came entirely into the possession of Hall, who carried it on till his death in 1772.

The light of newspaper literature dawned but very dimly at New York, for the *New York Gazette*, which was the first paper established in that city, and which was started in 1728 by William Bradford, the father of Andrew Bradford, the Pennsylvania postmaster, was in the interest and, in fact, the organ of the Governor, William Cosby, and

his council. Misunderstandings soon arose between the Governor and that party in the state of which the old Dutch families formed an important and influential section; and in 1733, the leader of the opposition, Rip van Dam, induced a printer, John Peter Zenger, to start the *New York Weekly Journal*, in which the Governor and his council were attacked unmercifully in prose and verse, argument and satire. This went on for nearly a year, when the council came to a resolution that Nos. 7, 47, 48, and 49 of the *Weekly Journal* were outrages against the dignity of his Majesty's Government, contained attacks upon the legislature and the most distinguished persons in the colony, and tended to excite sedition and disaffection. It therefore ordered the papers bearing these numbers to be burned by the hands of the common hangman. At the opening of the legislative session in October, 1734, the Government party proposed that a reward should be offered for the discovery of the writers of these libels; but the opposition mustered strongly, and voted the order of the day. The Governor and council thus foiled in the legislature, ordered the attorney-general to prosecute, and Zenger was arrested and carried before a magistrate on the charge of defamation and libel. The whole province was thrown into a state of excitement at the news, and as the day of trial approached, it became evident that the Governor and his party were determined to stake their power and authority upon its issue. It is one of the most remarkable trials of modern times. The judges had been named by Cosby only, without the consent of his council, and by virtue of a temporary commission at any time revocable, instead of being named by the crown and holding their offices for the term of their lives; and the first plea urged by the advocates of Zenger, Messrs. Alexander and Smith, was that the accused had no certainty of an impartial trial before a court so constituted. This the court declared to be an offence against itself, and refused to hear a word more from either of the advocates.

Zenger was then compelled to procure fresh counsel, and John Chambers of New York, and Andrew Hamilton, the senior member of the bar in Pennsylvania, who made the voyage for the express purpose of pleading for him, undertook his defence. They at once acknowledged the authorship of the alleged libels, and proposed to bring evidence of their truth; but this was refused by the president as merely an aggravation of the offence. Hamilton closed his brilliant speech for the defence in these words:—"The question which is argued before you this day is not only the cause of a poor printer, nor yet even of the colony of New York alone, it is the best of causes—the cause of liberty. Every man who prefers freedom to a life of slavery will bless and honour in you the men whose verdict will have secured to us, upon a firm basis—to us, to our posterity, to our neighbours, that right which both nature and the honour of our country give us, the liberty of freely speaking and writing the truth!" The jury, almost without a moment's consultation, acquitted Zenger, and the verdict was received with three rounds of cheers which shook the walls of the court. Zenger was set at liberty next day after eight months' imprisonment, and as the news spread, the excitement and rejoicing broke through all bounds. The municipal council of New York passed a vote of thanks to Hamilton, and presented him with the freedom of the city, "for his able and generous defence of the rights of man and of the liberty of the press," enclosed in a golden box of the weight of five and a half ounces, the cover of which bore the arms of the city, with the inscription, *Demersæ leges, timefacta libertas tandem emergunt.* Round the box was the motto from Cicero, *Ita cuique eveniat ut de republica meruit;* and inside it the words, *Non numinis virtute paratur.* Governor Morris, referring to this memorable trial fifty years afterwards, declared it to have been "the dawn of the American Revolution." Zenger continued his journal up till his death, which took place in the summer

of 1746, when it was carried on by his widow, and afterwards by his son, John Zenger.

But the mob which threw up their hats and shouted at the acquittal of the father, would have left the son to starve, for on the 28th of February, 1751, the *New York Weekly Journal* contains the following remarkable announcement:—"The country subscribers are earnestly entreated to send in their arrears; if they do not pay promptly, I shall leave off sending the paper, and try to recover my money otherwise. Some of these easy subscribers are in arrear for more than seven years. After serving them so long, I fancy it is time, and high time, that they should repay me my advances; for the truth is—and they may believe me—I have worn my clothes threadbare.—N.B. Gentlemen, if you have no ready money to spare, still think of your printer. When you have read this Advertisement, and thought over it, you cannot do less than say, 'Come, wife!' (I address myself principally to married folk, but let bachelors take it to heart also), 'Come, wife, let us send the poor printer some flour, or a few hams, butter, cheese, or poultry, &c.' In the meanwhile, I am your obedient servant, JOHN ZENGER." But neither money, butter, hams, nor poultry came to hand, and the paper died of starvation the very next year.

The *Weekly Postboy*, a paper founded by James Parker in January, 1743, appears now to have had the support of the opposition party in New York, but it got into trouble by its attacks upon the Episcopal Church, and died a violent death.

Maryland appears to have been the next province in which the press appeared, for the *Maryland Gazette* was published at Annapolis, by William Parker, from 1727 to 1736. This paper then dropped, but was revived by Jonas Green in 1745, and continues to this day, being the oldest paper in America. South Carolina had a paper, published at Charleston, in 1731 or 1732, the title of which is lost;

and in 1736, the *Virginia Gazette* first came out at Williamsburgh.

There were several mixed journals spread about the colonies, representing the populations in which the original founders of the plantation were German, Dutch, or French, or published in provinces which we had wrested from another country. In Canada, as we shall have to notice, the French and English papers exist to the present day; but in 1750, these mixed journals were to be met with in Pennsylvania and New York. In 1739, a German named Sower had founded a paper in the German language at Germantown, and in 1743 a compatriot, Anthony Ambruster, established another at Philadelphia; in 1751, a newspaper, half German and half English, was published at Lancaster; and in New York there were from time to time several papers partly printed in the Dutch language.

Yet the progress of the press in America had so far been slow: from 1740 to 1770, fifteen unsuccessful attempts were made in New York alone to establish newspapers. In 1720 there were only seven papers published in America; in 1740 the number was but doubled, and Boston still took the lead with five.

CHAPTER XXII.

THUNDER IN THE DISTANCE—THE VIRGINIA RESOLUTION—CHARLES CARROLL—SAMUEL HALL—THE AMERICAN PRESS BEATING TO ARMS—THE BOSTON PAPERS TAKE THE LEAD—OTIS, MAYHEW, AND ADAMS—A THREAT DISARMED, A BOON YIELDED, AND A BRIBE REFUSED—"THE MASSACHUSETTS SPY"—MEIN AND FLEMING—JOSEPH GREEN AND SAMUEL WATERHOUSE—EZEKIEL RUSSELL—SAMUEL LEONARD AND THE REST OF THE ROYALIST WRITERS—QUINCY, WARREN, AND CHAUNCY "CONTRA"—THE NEW YORK PRESS—NEW YORK WHIGS AND TORIES—ALEXANDER HAMILTON—INDEPENDENCE!—STATISTICS OF THE AMERICAN PRESS BEFORE THE LAST STRUGGLE—ITS FALLING OFF IN STYLE AND INCREASE IN NUMBERS AFTER IT—THE PRESS IN CANADA, NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, PRINCE EDWARD'S ISLAND, BERMUDA, THE BAHAMAS, HONDURAS, AND THE WEST INDIA ISLANDS—AND ITS DAWN IN INDIA.

THE speck on the horizon "no bigger than a man's hand," which was to swell into the great thunder-cloud of rebellion, was already seen; already heard, at intervals, but as yet faint and afar off, was the rising thunder; troublous times were brewing, and the first feelings of resistance and a consciousness of their strength finding place in the breasts of the American colonists: they were met by a Government arrogant of its power, by irritating efforts at counter resistance, by contumely and insult, or contemptuous indifference. On the 29th of May, 1765, the celebrated Resolutions of Virginia were moved in the Legislative Assembly of that province by Patrick Henry, and carried unanimously. The Governor, enraged at the step, sent for the minute-book or journal, and with his own hand erased the Resolutions and tore the minutes to pieces, and, after the manner of greater models, of his mere act and motion declared the Assembly dissolved. But the declaration so solemnly voted could not be so easily stifled; and a copy of

the Resolutions appeared *verbatim*, in the next number of the *Maryland Gazette*, accompanied by a strong expression of approval. One of the writers of this paper was a Roman Catholic of Irish extraction, named Charles Carroll, who, having been sent from the plantations at a very early age for education at St. Omer, and afterwards at Bourges, had imbibed no favourable feeling for England, we may be sure. Spending two years in London to pass the bar at the Inner Temple,* he was doubtless exasperated by the many annoyances with which Roman Catholics were then surrounded, and, returning home to Maryland, at the very time when the odious Stamp Act was being forced upon the American people by the English Parliament, he was as ready as he was qualified to take the lead, in his native province, of the opposition to that impolitic measure. He himself signed the Resolutions as a member of the Assembly, and published them in the *Maryland Gazette*. The Resolutions were reprinted into the *Newport Mercury*, the paper which James Franklin had established in Rhode Island, but which was now in the hands of Samuel Hall; but the paper was instantly suppressed as a traitorous publication. It sprung again into existence afterwards, and took an active part in the work which ensued. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* took up the cause of the Resolutions: the *South Carolina Gazette*, and the *General American Gazette* followed: and a new paper—the *Gazette and Country Journal*—was immediately started by Charles Crouch, to support the Virginian Assembly, and oppose the Stamp Duty. The American press was buckling on its arms! When the news got to Massachusetts, the Boston papers blazed it abroad: they had been for the last twelvemonths cautioning the people as to what was coming. Oxenbridge Thatcher was dead, but there were James Otis and Jonathan Mayhew to sound the alarm, which soon called up John Adams, who wrote an

* Or as a French author whom we have already quoted has it, he "passed two years in London, *at Temple Bar*."

Essay in the *Boston Gazette* which was reprinted in the shape of a pamphlet in London, and excited the admiration of the Whigs to a pitch of frenzy. The Home Government, startled by the violence of the language in which the paper indulged, hoped to get power from the Parliament to suppress it; and the Duke of Bedford in the House of Lords, and Mr. Grenville in the House of Commons, called attention to the matter; and, declaring the paper was filled with treason and sedition, moved the appointment of a committee to take into consideration the course to be pursued. In both houses, however, the motion was lost. The Government now opened the arms of conciliation. The Stamp duty was repealed; and, more likely with a view to breaking up, than of gratifying, the Opposition party in Boston, John Adams, the writer of the *Boston Gazette*, was offered the post of Advocate-General to the Court of Admiralty, which, however, he at once refused to accept. Newspapers of a more violent character sprang up—perhaps the most violent being the *Massachusetts Spy*, started in 1769, and urging the most extreme measures, which Quincy, Adams, and Warren were now attempting to discourage. To meet this fierce opponent, the Government put forward the *Boston Chronicle*, a well-edited paper, superior to all its Massachusetts contemporaries in the detail of "getting-up," which had been established by John Mein, a bookseller, and John Fleming, a printer, of Boston, in December, 1767. Mein wrote the greater part of it, and was joined by Joseph Green, a Boston wit, and Samuel Waterhouse, who held a superior post in the Customs. Their shafts were aimed at the religious fanaticism, the affected piety, and the laboured efforts to play over again the Puritan fathers, which distinguished some of the leading men of the Opposition, and on which they heaped a mass of ridicule. But it did not last long. Mein, of course, had to face the popular opposition, which at last developed itself in threats against his life. In the autumn of 1769, these became so violent that he secretly

decamped to England, abandoning his business to the mob and his paper to his partner Fleming, who attempted to carry it on for a short time, but was obliged, for his own safety, to give it up early in 1770. Mein was afterwards indemnified for his losses by the English Government, and employed upon one of the London papers; and Fleming, being, in 1778, included in the Act of Proscription, which banished from Massachusetts, under pain of death, all persons remaining loyal to the royal cause, and confiscated their estates, also fled to London, as his colleague had done before him. A second attempt to rally the literary forces in the *Censor*, a paper treating of politics only and eschewing news, was equally abortive. Ezekiel Russell, who had been unsuccessful in an attempt to establish a journal at Portsmouth in New Hampshire, was placed at their head; but in less than a twelvemonth they were broken up, and the *Censor* was dead. The royalist cause was now represented in Massachusetts by one paper only, the *Massachusetts Gazette*, which still remained loyal. Among its contributors were Daniel Leonard; the Lieutenant-Governor of the province, Andrew Oliver; the senior counsel, William Brattle, and the Attorney-General, Jonathan Sewell. Leonard wrote a series of clever articles in this paper, under the pseudonym of "Massachusettsensis," which were considered by the other party of sufficient importance to be specially replied to by John Adams, who, with the signature of "Novanglus," took up the gauntlet in the *Boston Gazette*, in a series of papers, which were reprinted in 1823.

Another paper was set up in Boston, in 1768, by the Opposition party, called the *Journal of Occurrences*, which is a curiosity of the time. One half of it only was printed, and the other left blank for the recording, day by day, of the grievances and troubles of the colonies, or the disturbances and tumults which occasionally arose in the city itself between the two regiments stationed there, the Customs

fficers, and the people. The cause lost some of its staunchest adherents, and the *Boston Gazette* some of its most powerful writers, whilst the struggle was only yet beginning. Thatcher and Mayhew were dead, and James Otis was insane; but new and true men stepped into the gaps they had left in the ranks, and Samuel Adams found himself reinforced by such men as Josiah Quincy, Warren, nd Chauncy, the Puritan minister.

The Whig papers of Boston now began to adopt the alarming device, which foreshadowed the republican union —a wood-cut of a serpent cut to pieces, but each piece bearing the initial of one of the provinces, with the words, in large type, in the centre, "JOIN OR DIE!" The clouds were, indeed, gathering low; the sky was darkening, and there were unmistakeable signs all around that the storm could not be far off.

The *Massachusetts Spy*, however, took the lead of the Boston press in violence and daring; and Adams' articles and the *Boston Gazette* were tame compared with the fury of the *Spy*. Nay, it even attacked them in unmeasured language for their moderation, so eager was it for the fray. In 1771 it began to counsel a recourse to arms; it proclaimed all the wild vagaries of universal liberty and equality; and openly pronounced that the time had come for the sword to be drawn and the tie which joined America to the mother country severed. A writer in its columns, signing himself "Mutius Scevola," was particularly violent; described Governor Hutchinson as an interloper and an usurper, and declaring all English authority deposed, called upon the Assembly to take into its hands the administration of the province. The pleadings of the *Massachusetts Gazette* were becoming inaudible in the midst of all this din—the royal cause found but a faint voice in the Boston press. The battle of the pen was lost by the Government, and the battle of the sword began; when that unhappy battle ended, the press was no longer British!

Meanwhile, in New York, Philip Schuyler and George Clinton, the two leaders of the Opposition party, had blown into life again John Zenger's abandoned paper, the *New York Journal*, which, at first smouldering in sedition, soon blazed forth into a flame of rebellion. A Scotchman named MacDougal was the editor of it. The Government here, as at Boston, attempted to use the press as a weapon of defence, and got over the *Royal Gazette* of James Rivington to plead its cause. The principal advocates who appeared in the columns of this paper were, Isaac Wilkins, the leader of the royalist party in the legislative assembly, and a man of great influence and considerable talent; Seabury, the Attorney-General; the Reverend Samuel Chandler, the Reverend John Vardill, and Doctor Myles Cooper, the president of King's College. If the most talented of this group were Wilkins, Vardill was the most witty, and levelled the most cutting satire at the *New York Journal*, and at Holt, its ostensible proprietor and printer. There then stepped into the ranks of the Opposition, in defence of Holt and his paper, a remarkable man, who was to be famous afterwards for his association with Washington—Alexander Hamilton. He was the son of a Scotch father and a French mother, and was born in the island of Nevis in 1757, and sent to New York for his education. He was then only sixteen years of age, when he entered the lists against such formidable adversaries, and dealt telling blows upon the head and shoulders of Vardill, and of his late preceptor, Dr. Myles Cooper. But the youth, with the chivalry that ever accompanies such souls as his, would not see his old master harmed, when mob violence, breaking loose from the cause it had espoused, ran riot in the city, and scandalised the Whigs, as well as Tories, by its excesses. A mob had gathered for the purpose of proceeding to King's College, and there seizing upon Dr. Myles Cooper, and ducking, if not drowning him; but Hamilton, apprised of their design, made for the college, and, arriving there

before the populace, harangued them from the steps, imploring them not to disgrace the cause by assassination. For a few minutes the crowd listened, and hesitated, and Myles Cooper had, in the interim, escaped on board a British man-of-war, in the roads. The mob, disappointed of their prey, fell upon the printing-office of James Rivington, and the *Royal Gazette*, and demolished it, as well as the printer's dwelling-house.

Soon after this Thomas Paine's pamphlets, published at irregular periods, but all numbered and paged like newspapers, and named "The American Crisis," appeared and first pronounced the word which had been faltering upon so many bleached lips and trembling tongues, of men who shuddered as they saw the only alternative more plainly; separation and "independence"—soon after this the renegade English General Lee offered his services to the rebel cause; and then broke out the flame that consumed to ashes the bond that had bound together Great Britain and her "plantations in America."

During the War of Independence, it was the newspaper press that animated the struggle, cheering on the colonists, denouncing the royalists, and, finally, proclaiming the republic; but when the victory it had helped so considerably to gain was won, its mission was accomplished—its character was changed. It no longer was a member of the British press—but it no longer bore a likeness to its former self. The columns in which the pens of Franklin, Samuel and John Adams, Jefferson, Jay, Carroll, Hamilton, and Madison had inscribed the burning words, which lit the flame of patriotism all over that vast continent, became dull and vapid with the commonplaces of the men who succeeded them. The vitality of the question was gone from the press, to be kept up by the same men in the Senate. The newspapers were still playing out the drama with a company of poor strollers, in the characters of the great men who had attracted the eyes of the world to that

stage the season before; poorer and poorer became the actors, yet more numerous the barns and scaffolds on which they exhibited. Under the rule of the stars and stripes, a newspaper press has flourished, which is in too many cases the mere organ of public corruption or private slander, but which has a flimsy representative in every inconsiderable Troy or miserable Carthage—every Rome of a hundred inhabitants, or Athens counting fifty chimney-pots. The number of newspapers has increased almost beyond belief since the declaration of independence; but it may fairly be doubted whether their character has improved.

The latest statistics which we possess of the American as a British press, are of the year 1775, when the number of newspapers was thirty-six, which were thus distributed: Pennsylvania, nine; Massachusetts, seven; Connecticut, four; New York, four; South Carolina, three; Maryland, two; North Carolina, two; Rhode Island, two; Virginia, two; Georgia, one; New Hampshire, one.

Meanwhile the press was spreading over the new world, and among the islands of the West Indies. Only five years after Canada fell wholly under our dominion, an English newspaper started up, and the *Quebec Gazette* appeared in January, 1765. The second paper, the *Montreal Gazette*, did not appear until 1775.

John Bushnell published the first newspaper which appeared in Nova Scotia, the *Halifax Gazette*, on a half sheet of foolscap, in January, 1751; but he only continued it for a few months, when its publication was, for some reason, suspended, and, although resumed after an interval, it did not come out with any degree of regularity until 1760. In 1761, Anthony Henri undertook it, and, on the extension of the British Stamp Act to the colony in 1765, the size was doubled. The circulation at this time was seventy copies weekly. The second paper was com-

menced in 1766, and the third appeared on the breaking out of the War of Independence; but we opine that the second had already dropped, for our returns mention, in 1761, one; in 1766, two; and in 1771, one.

New Brunswick had two or three papers published at St. John's, in 1782; but the early press of Prince Edward's Island appears to have come to grief, for, although in 1795 there was the *St. John's Mercury* first commenced at Charlottetown, there was no trace of a newspaper in the island in 1802.

Bermuda was slow in adopting the newspaper press. Colonised in 1609, it got on without a paper till one J. Stockdale established the *Bermuda Gazette* in July, 1784.

The first paper in the Bahamas was the *Royal Bahama Gazette*, established at Nassau, New Providence, in 1783. In Honduras, the press was founded soon after the colony, and the *Honduras Gazette* started early in the last century.

Barbadoes has the honour of being the first of the West India islands where the newspaper appeared. One Samuel Keimer started the *Barbadoes Gazette* in 1731. He had no competitor till the *Barbadoes Mercury* appeared in 1762, under the management of George Edmund & Co., and which continued until a fire destroyed the office and plant in 1845, when it was discontinued.

Grenada comes next to Barbadoes, having possessed a newspaper as early as 1742: and then Antigua, where the press was first founded in 1748; in which year St. Kitt's also had a *Gazette*.

Dominica, which only came into our hands in 1763, had an English newspaper in 1765; and, in 1784, we find St. Vincent in possession of a paper.

Eastward ho! A British press is founded in India, but it is a rickety bantling as yet. *Hicking's Gazette*, the first British newspaper published in our Oriental empire, was started at Calcutta on the 29th of January, 1781; and, on

the 4th of March, 1784, it was followed by a small official sheet, the *Calcutta Gazette or Oriental Advertiser*. In January, 1795, the still-surviving *Bengal Hurkuru* was established, also at Calcutta. But the close of the century saw the Indian press in chains, as we shall have to relate at a more convenient season.

The Mauritius press, although in existence since 1773, was not our own, seeing that the island was still under the dominion of the French; but the quaint, black-looking *Cerneen* has come into our possession with the island, and, without a change in its Gallic features, has survived the transfer, unshaken.

Such were the few feeble lights which the press emitted in the East. As for the land where now morning and evening papers come out daily, rivalling those of London, it was then trod only by the foot of the savage and the kangaroo: one knowing or caring about as much as the other of the engine which shakes the civilised world as it takes its daily journey; whilst not even the speculations of a "Citizen of the World" had ventured to shadow forth the idea of an English press in China.

Five-and-twenty years will have passed over our colonial empire at our next glance, and we may then see a change which will astonish us.

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